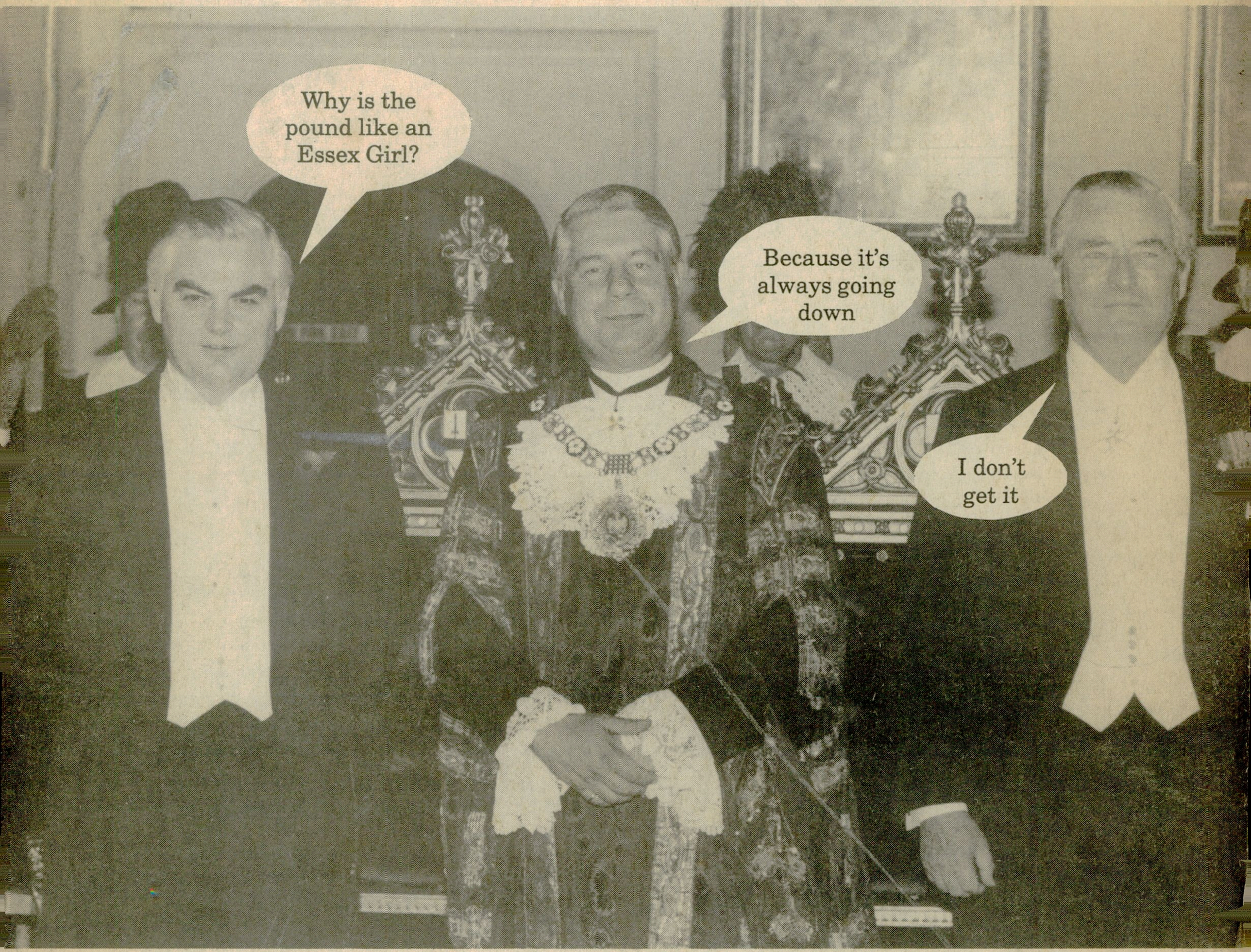
PRIVATE EYE

80p

No. 784
Friday
3 Jan. '92



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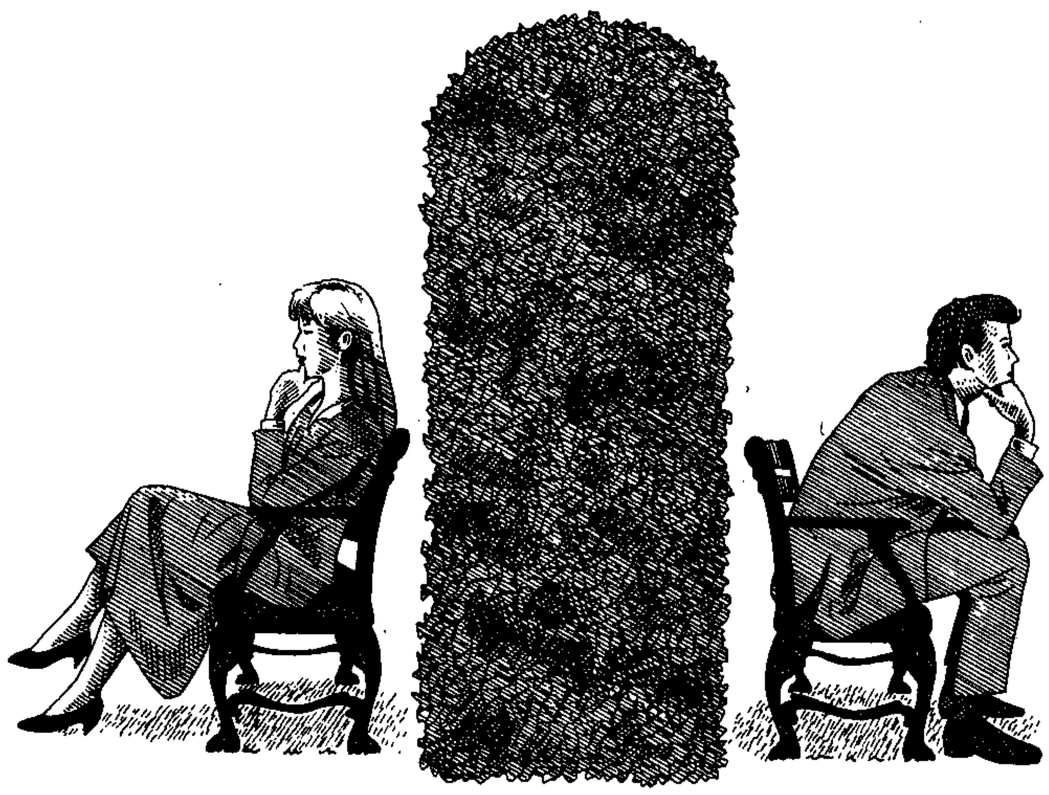

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Dateline, we must stress, is not for people who think it might be a bit of a lark, but for caring people who are looking for something more. Perhaps that describes you?
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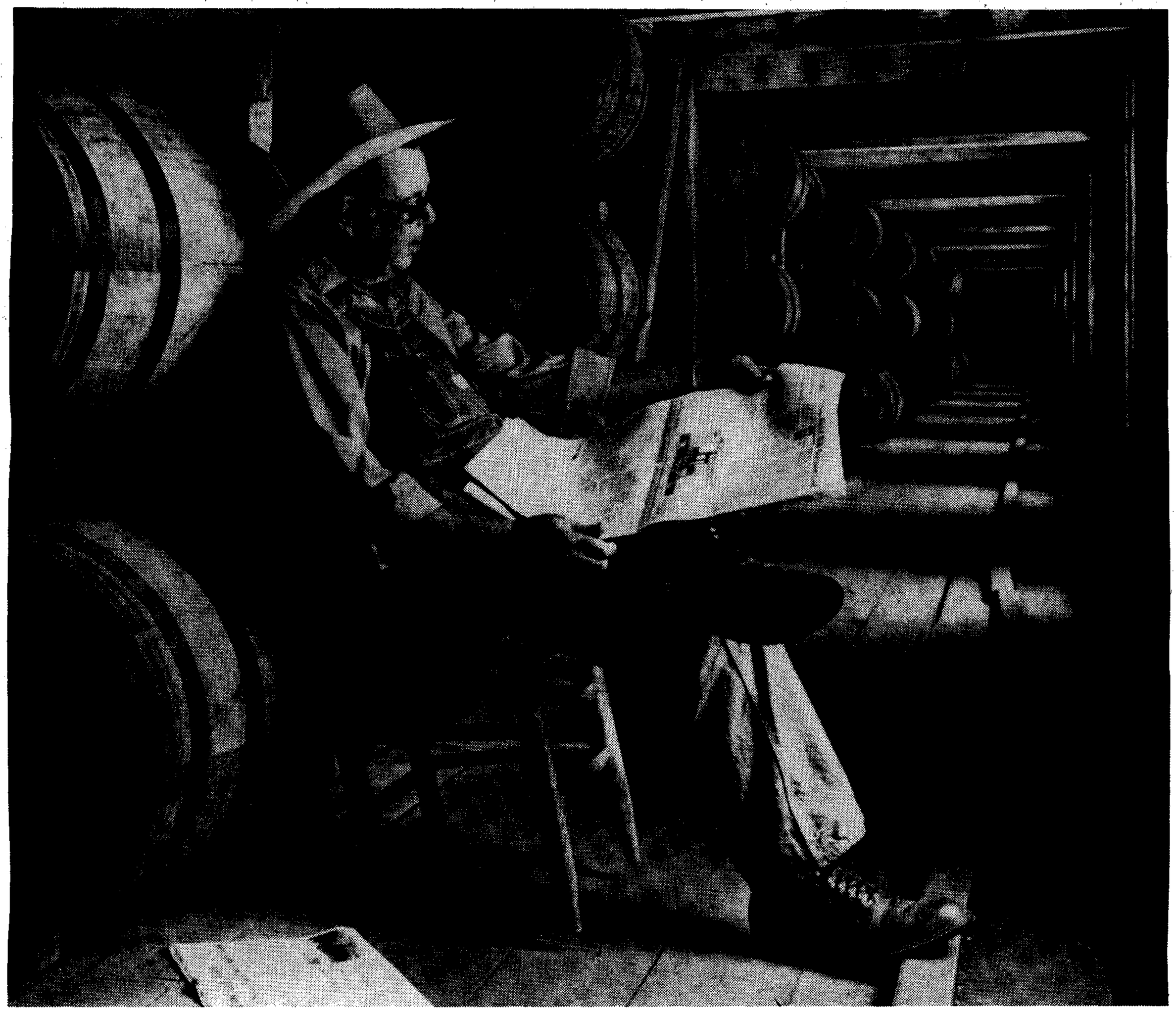

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If you'd like to know more about our unique whiskey, write to us for a free booklet at the Jack Daniel's Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee.

ADVERTISEMENT

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Heart maintenance

Enjoying a long and active life depends on keeping the heart and circulation healthy.

Happily, research is now showing us a number of ways in which we could really help ourselves:

1. Eat less fat – more fibre
2. Take more exercise
3. Stop smoking and...
4. Start taking garlic

Why garlic?

We now know that it is important for the health of the heart that we maintain our blood fats and cholesterol at the correct levels.

Recent scientific studies suggest that taking garlic regularly could help us keep these levels normal.

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Kwai is now Europe's No.1 non-prescription health brand and over 1 million people use it every day. Kwai is the ideal way to take garlic which could help maintain a healthy heart and circulation. That's why nine out of ten people who try Kwai, stay with Kwai.

Kwai is available throughout Great Britain from Boots, chemists, Superdrug, Holland and Barrett and other health food outlets.

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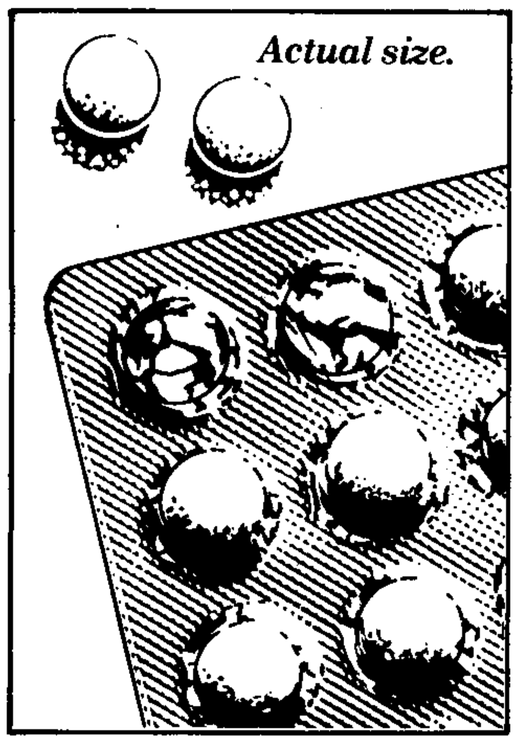
For your free trial pack, just send a stamped addressed envelope (min. size 8 1/2 x 4 inches) to Kwai, Dept. P E 1 P.O. Box No. 21, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1YS.



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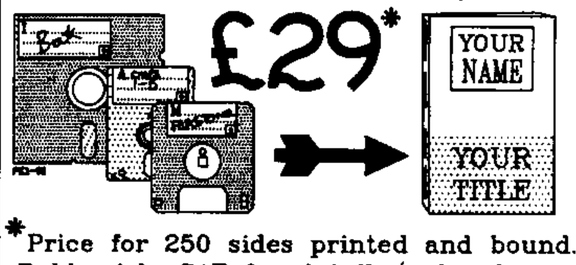

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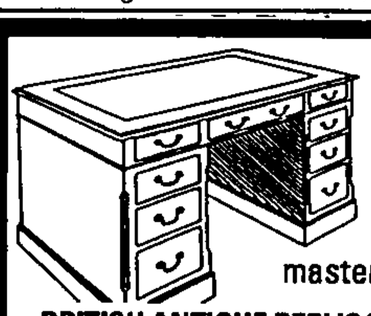

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Gnome

I AM heartily sick of being misrepresented in the national press over a comment I made last year to the Institute of Directors.

In a lighthearted aside I described one of the products of my chain store, Gnomeners, as "total crap".

However, it is quite outrageous to suggest that I applied this description to any of my other products.

There is clearly a huge difference between innocently describing one of my sherry decanters as "total crap" and deliberately describing, say, my jewellery as "total crap".

This huge difference is well understood by my lawyers, Messrs Sue, Grabbit & Runne, who have been instructed to issue writs immediately to anyone who fails to grasp this obvious point.

My lawyers appreciate that the suggestion that I consider *any* Gnomeners item *apart* from the aforementioned decanter as anything less than top quality, is very very very libellous indeed.

In fact it is so libellous that it might well recoup me all the money that I lost last year because the public thought that I had insulted their intelligence and therefore they wouldn't shop at my stores any more. You have been warned.

Meanwhile, to all my customers may I wish you a very crappy New Year *(shurely 'happy'? E.S.)*.

E. Strobes
Lord Gnome
Crapners
London

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PRIVATE EYE COLOUR SECTION

JOHN MAJOR's panic talks with the building societies did not improve his image with them. Rather rudely, they accused him of being partly responsible for the huge build-up in mortgage arrears.

When Major Major tried to explain how tremendously sympathetic he was to unemployed people who could not pay their mortgages, one of the societies' spokesmen, who said he voted Tory, quoted verbatim from the Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1986, which were passed by the House of Commons five years ago.

The regulations cut the benefit previously paid to homeowners who lose their jobs. Before 1986, people were helped with their mortgage interest by state benefits as soon as they were unemployed. Since 1986, thanks to the new regulations, no unemployed homeowner under 60 gets a penny benefit towards the mortgage interest until he or she has been out of work for 16 weeks.

Labour, Liberals and the building societies strongly resisted this miserly cut, which "saved" the government a trifling £23m a year but which affected 75,000 unemployed people. They all predicted that people immediately got into arrears and would never be able to make them up. This in turn, it was suggested, would lead to a huge rise in evictions and repossessions.

The suggestion was laughed at by the then Minister for Social Security and the Disabled. "There is no reason for this," he confidently proclaimed, "and it will not happen".

Not only has it happened, but the number of repossessions in 1992 is likely to be uncannily close to the number of people affected by the 1986 cuts imposed by the Minister for Social Security.

That minister, who earned himself a reputation as the meanest politician ever to pass the doors of the DSS was John Major.

FOR the privatisation of "support services" in the civil services, the Government has turned to an old friend — P&O, the shipping company which has no civil service experience but which has given the Conservative Party nearly half a million pounds in the last seven years.

Its chairman, Lord Sterling of Zeebrugge, was a government adviser through most of the Thatcher years; and P&O also has an excellent record in smashing trade unions and cutting its workers' pay. This is presumably why the Department of Social Security has handed it the lucrative facilities management contract at Quarry House, Leeds, which will be the base of the Social Security Benefits Agency, not to mention the new National Health Service Management Executive which opens next summer.

Meanwhile, a P&O subsidiary, Pace Services, has won the contract for supplying school meals in Merton and Dorset, where the food is expected to be at least as revolting as that served on P&O ferries.

THE clearing of the three men wrongly convicted of murdering PC Keith Blakelock has come as such a terrible blow to the police that they are anxious to postpone any more exposures of major injustices.

This probably explains why Merseyside police have "let it be known" that their inquiry into new evidence about the innocence of the three men in prison for killing newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater in 1978 should take "up to a year".

The rumour — which has been very carefully nurtured — has come as a shock to the men's families. They were hoping for an early release. The new evidence is chiefly composed of four statements from internationally-renowned language experts and suggests that the crucial confession in the case — by Pat Molloy, who has since died in prison — was not dictated in Molloy's words as the police said it was.

The confession, incidentally, was taken by two officers of the discredited West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad. One of them, John Perkins, has since been disciplined by his own force for fabricating a confession. He has been involved in at least one other case where wrongly convicted men have been released. Mr Perkins is now retired on health grounds, and has just come back from one of his surprisingly frequent cruises on the QE2.

Meanwhile, the Merseyside police have shown just how good they are at inquiries with their conclusion that there was "no conspiracy" in the Manchester police's prosecution of former Tory city boss, Kevin Taylor.

The fraud case against Taylor collapsed ignominiously more than a year ago before the defence presented its case. There was in fact no case at all. Few people in Manchester understand why more than a million pounds of public money was spent in this fantastic prosecution and can think of no other reason Kevin Taylor's life should have been ruined except, of course, that he was once a friend of the former deputy chief constable of Manchester, John Stalker.

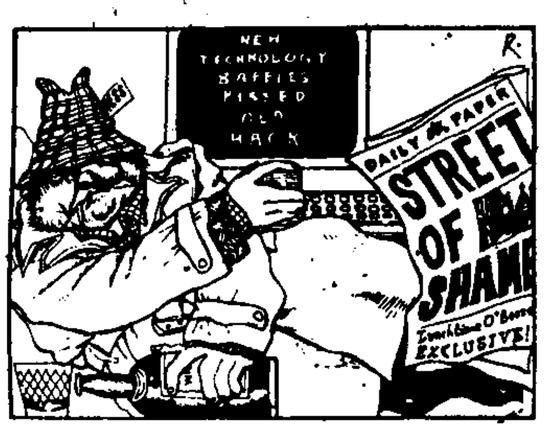
THE South West Water Authority, whose directors are much richer now than before privatisation, were not very happy with recent counts of human excrement floating in the water off the popular beaches at St Ives, Cornwall.

At Porthgwidden beach the count for "faecal califorms" (water authority-speak for turds) was 74,000. The EC absolute "imperative" upper limit for such counts is 2,000.

The authority was quick to explain: they blamed "overcast skies". Unfortunately, this ingenious excuse is unlikely to get them off the European hook. Article 512 of the relevant EC directive allows authorities to overlook "failed" tests "when they are the result of floods, other natural disasters or abnormal weather conditions".

Meanwhile, the authority continues with its plans to fill St Ives Bay with untreated sewage from the entire West Cornwall peninsular.

"Boris Yeltsin got Russia for Christmas and it fell apart by Boxing Day"



ONLY the *Express* newspapers, edited by Esther Rantzen's chums Sir Nicholas Lloyd and Lady Bollard, could find a word of Christmas cheer for La Rancid after another imbecile jury awarded her £250,000 damages against *The People* newspaper.

Outside the *Express* the award was greeted with universal nausea and horror. What was the *People*'s crime? It had criticised Rantzen for not publicly exposing on her programme a schoolteacher who had in his possession a collection of the most revolting child pornography which he had composed.

The teacher, Alex Standish, had helped her expose Philip Cadman, headmaster of Cookham Court school, and Cadman had been sent down for ten years. Standish had then got a job at another school, after Rantzen knew about his pornography collection.

The facts in the *People* article were not in dispute. Rantzen claimed the innuendo was that she had not exposed Standish because he had helped her in her former programme. This the *People* denied. Its criticism was that she had not exposed Standish — their article did not explore the reasons why. With constant histrionics and endless tears, Rantzen told the court that she had passed the information about Standish on to the police, and her duty stopped there.

Standish, incidentally, had sued the *People* first. The jury found he had indeed been libelled and awarded him the unusual sum of £0 in damages. Standish has to pay all his costs.

An interesting feature of the case was Rantzen's reaction to the *People*'s request for a comment on Standish before the article was published. She refused to speak to a mere reporter, and instead phoned the then editor, Richard Stott. Unknown to her, Stott recorded the conversation. In it, he stuck to the *People*'s view that Rantzen should have exposed Standish. Furiously, Rantzen courageously wrote at once to the then owner of the *People*, Robert Maxwell, complaining that she had had nothing but abuse from Stott throughout the conversation. The article was published, including some of Rantzen's quotes to Stott. When Rantzen sued she complained that the conversation was off the record. Unfortunately, there is no mention of "off the record" in the taped conversation, which is also entirely free of abuse. Unabashed, Rantzen bravely put the blame on the editor's secretary, whom, she claimed, she had asked if she could speak to Stott off the record. This seemed unlikely, especially when the secretary was brought to court and denied any reference to "off the record".

If Rantzen had lost the case, she would not have lost a penny. The BBC paid all her costs. She ended up with two QCs — Geoffrey Shaw her junior was made up to QC during the case, presumably for his glorious performance on behalf of that other successful libel litigant, Sonia Sutcliffe.

Esther, one of the highest-paid performers in television, said early on in the action that she would give her damages to charity. Then she said she was going to spend at least some of them on a smashing Christmas for the kids.

THE *Daily Express*, joining the row over which *Mirror* executive was the most servile towards Robert Maxwell, published an article by Bob Edwards who, it noted, had been editor of the *Sunday People* and group editor of *Mirror* newspapers.

It omitted one item from his CV — that he was editor not once but twice of the *Daily Express*. Presumably, with the stories circulating about the lunchtime capers in Maxwell's dining room, the rag preferred to forget its own close association with one of the participants.

LORD Stevens of Ludgate, the former close friend and business associate of Robert Maxwell, is a man of many talents. As well as running Express Newspapers, not to mention *Punch* (*What that? Ed.*), he is also the chairman of a firm called Alexander Proudfoot.

The Express group decided recently to hire a team of outside "consultants" to advise it on how to run its business more efficiently. And which lucky firm won this lucrative contract? Why, Alexander Proudfoot.

HAS Garry Bushell, the pisspoor ex-skinhead TV critic, finally flipped his lid? His career is now every bit as erratic as his "writing".

Little more than ten minutes ago he left the *Sun* for the *Daily Star*, his leaving present from editor Kelvin Mackenzie — a foul tirade of four-letter words — ringing in his ears. Now it appears he is to return to his spiritual home at Wapping as an associate editor — thanks to sweet blandishments from a silver-tongued Kelvin and the promise of a whopping salary.

This will be a big disappointment for *Star* readers who will no longer be able to submit items to "Garry's Goofs", a regular slot in his column for his "television howlers".

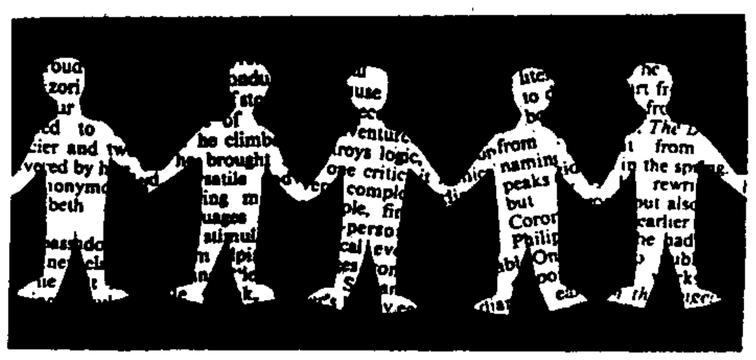
A prime goof is Bushell's recent attack on BBC drama. "It's hard to believe they're humming and harring over whether to bring the disastrous *Trainer* back for a second series," he scribbled. "Do yourselves a favour, chaps, and dispatch it to the knackers' yard quick. Such wooden performances haven't been seen since the Log Lady's on *Twin Peaks*..."

This was somewhat at odds with his earlier verdict: "The BBC have backed a winner here," he told *Sun* readers in September. "This 4 million racing soap will fulfil all their ratings hopes. That's a racing certainty."

Such prescient consistency makes Gal worth every single penny of the £80,000 a year Kelvin's going to pay him.

LIFE looks very grim indeed for the Tories: even the *Financial Times* has been hinting it may withdraw support for them in the election.

In an editorial on Maastricht, it hailed John Major's "personal victory" but said that with the economy in trouble, "he will need more than the tactical skills shown at Maastricht to *deserve* victory in the general election."



HOW THEY ARE RELATED

THE *Evening Standard* recently carried a gushing profile of Anthony and Rosie Cheetham, the husband-and-wife publishing team who were ousted from Random Century, only to set up a new venture called Orion and purchase Lord Weidenfeld's ailing house. The profile was by Anne de Courcy.

FACT: Anne de Courcy is Rosie Cheetham's sister.

The *Glasgow Herald*, alone among newspapers in Scotland, carried a savage attack on the Broadcasting Complaints Commission for having the temerity to find against Hyndland Television, an independent production company. Hyndland's managing director, David Kemp, was quoted at length. He accused the BCC of factual errors and invited the Government to close it down.

FACT: The editor of the *Glasgow Herald* is David Kemp's brother Arnold, who is also a minor shareholder in Hyndland Television.

JAMES "Jamie" Fergusson, the bookish obituaries editor of the *Independent*, was surprised the other day by a visit from cuban-heeled Matthew Symons, chief gauleiter to Whittam Strobes.

"We understand you are an old friend of Kevin Maxwell's," cried the excited Symons. Fergusson admitted that this was indeed the case. "Then it is your duty to tell us his home address," said Symons.

Fergusson demurred, however, arguing that Maxwell Junior was his friend and that he had no obligation to divulge the address to Symons. The latter thereupon flew into a rage, stamped his foot and stormed out.

Shortly afterwards, Fergusson received a phone call from Whittam Strobes himself. "We don't employ the torture rack here," said the former saint. "But you have a duty to the company to reveal the address."

The gallant Jamie stuck to his guns and eventually the peeved Strobes rang off. It emerged later that a hack on the news desk had tracked down the address in about five minutes.

HACKS at the *Daily Mirror* have noticed in recent weeks that all copy about Robert Maxwell is labelled in the computer as "for final approval by Charles Wilson" before it appears in the paper.

This signifies a remarkable transformation in the fortunes of Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson. Until Cap'n Bob's death, Charlie had little to do with the *Mirror*: he had been brought into the company by Maxwell to run the *Sporting Life*, and he had more recently been asked to go and keep an eye on the *New York Daily News*. Yet suddenly he has become a leading member of the troika running Mirror Group Newspapers (along with Ernie Burrington and Richard Stott).

His new "hands-on" presence at the *Mirror* has no doubt been monitored with particular interest by one of the paper's columnists, Anne *Points of View* Robinson: for between 1968 and 1973 she was Charlie Wilson's wife. Her marriage to "Gorbals" ended in a spectacularly acrimonious divorce, and the fiery hackette is unlikely to be amused if she has to submit any of her columns "for final approval by Charles Wilson".

Hacks
YOU CAN'T TRUST ANOTHER FOREIGN TYCOON TO RUN THE MIRROR
WHEREAS THE PEOPLE WHO SUCKED UP TO THE PREVIOUS ONE...
... ER ... WOULD BE IDEAL ... ER ...
'Management Buy-out'

BESET by disasters, the Government can draw comfort from one bit of politicking that has worked well: the announcement three months ago by Malcolm Rifkind, Transport Secretary, that the rail link to the Channel Tunnel would take an easterly route through Stratford and not through the marginal constituencies of Kent and south London.

There, for some strange reason, inhabitants did not welcome the idea of thunderous, high-speed expresses and all-night freight trains. The east Londoners, said Riffraff, just loved the prospect and it would bring them untold riches.

The announcement was not made to Parliament but to the Tory Party conference, a tacit acknowledgement that it had nothing to do with transport policy and everything to do with pre-election expediency. In support of this analysis, in the three months that have passed not a single move has been made to prepare the ground for the new route.

No teams with tape measures, sticks of chalk, spirit levels or theodolites have been deciding which garden is to lose three feet off its bottom, which bedroom window will overlook the all-night train line and which house will, alas, have to be demolished.

A BR spokesman admitted that this was because no one knew what was intended. "We are in the same situation as at the time of the announcement of the easterly route," he said. "It is still just a line on a map. The general direction has been thought about but it is a concept rather than a route. We can't do any detailed planning or engineering until we know things like station policy, whether it is going to be freight as well as passenger, what it is supposed to provide, is it supposed to be regenerative, bearing in mind that it is chosen to go through a regeneration area? If it is to be regenerative, what is it supposed to do? Until the Government decide what they want from it, detailed planning would be a waste of time."

IN A COMRADELY gesture, Tony Benn has shown his commitment to the success of the New Model Labour Party by agreeing to postpone publication of the latest volume of his diaries, for 1980 onwards, until after the election.

With the NMLP's chances still dicey, Kinnochio must surely be relieved that the Tory press will be deprived of a wonderful opportunity to revive memories of the internecine conflicts of the Benn era when socialism, democracy (but not social democracy), equality, trade unionism and other unpopular concepts made Labour unelectable.

ROGER GODSIFF, prospective MP for Birmingham Small Heath (see *Eyes passim*), has made so many enemies that he looks set to turn into a parliamentary has-been without setting foot in Westminster.

Godsiff has been called in by the party's national executive committee (NEC), which wants to know how he has managed to prepare one of Britain's safest socialist seats for a possible Tory victory.

Godsiff's arrival in Small Heath has seen the local party split in two and then suspended. He has been burned in effigy on bonfire night by once-loyal Labour Party members, who in desperation have also taken to mounting public demonstrations against him every weekend. He has even brought the church out against him. Election leaflets describe him as a Christian but two local vicars, the Revs Keith Sinclair and David Horn, have said his antics "bring Christ's name into disrepute" and added their weight to calls for an investigation.

Readers may recall how Godsiff, formerly an anonymous London-based union official with the GMB, beat three senior local councillors in the selection battle thanks to careful management of the union vote.

Party members found themselves suddenly enrolled in unions at some expense without their knowledge, creating a mass of union branches whose constituency-voting delegates were, strangely, good friends with Godsiff.

Now national organiser Joyce Gould has completed a secret inquiry into his activities and his opponents. In the week before Christmas she told the NEC to leave the rest alone: it was Godsiff who should be questioned.

He has been told to attend the next NEC meeting later this month to explain his antics. The Tories, meanwhile, have appointed a popular local Asian immigration worker as their candidate: a canny move in a constituency with a majority of ethnic electors. If Godsiff survives the Labour Party, he still has to face the voters...

LABOUR MAY have seen off the hard left threat on Merseyside but it is an open secret that if *Spectator* Backbencher of the Year Dave Nellist, recently thrown out of the party for espousing its constitution too strongly, were to resign his Coventry East seat and re-submit himself to the electorate soon the official Labour candidate would be seen off.

But first Nellist would need one of the main parties to seek the writ for the by-election, a chance few would be willing to take, even with the outside possibility of humiliating Kinnochio.

So Labour's chances of retaining the seat rest on finding a suitable candidate and mounting a successful PR campaign to win back waverers from the hard-done-by Nellist camp in record time.

Although no candidate has been found yet, parliamentary lobby hacks have been told that former National Union of Journalists' president Dennis MacShane is the Walworth Road choice.

But MacShane, a visiting lecturer at the nearby University of Warwick, is not only ideally *un*suited to represent Britain's most boring city — he lives in Geneva where he is general secretary of the International Metalworkers' Federation — but he is livid that his name has been bandied about between the lobby and Walworth Road Labour Party headquarters.

MacShane swears he will give a year's salary to the first person who can prove that he has been in contact with Walworth Road within the last five years. So how did his name get leaked? Well, one member of the parliamentary lobby group might know. Peter Mandelson, parliamentary candidate for Hartlepool, is the Westminster columnist for *Labour Party News*.

A SHATTERING blow has been dealt to Michael Heseltine's plan to turn east London into a showcase of prosperity and present himself to the nation as the man with the Midas touch: British Midland has decided to stop using City Airport, linchpin of the great metropolis envisaged by Hezza.

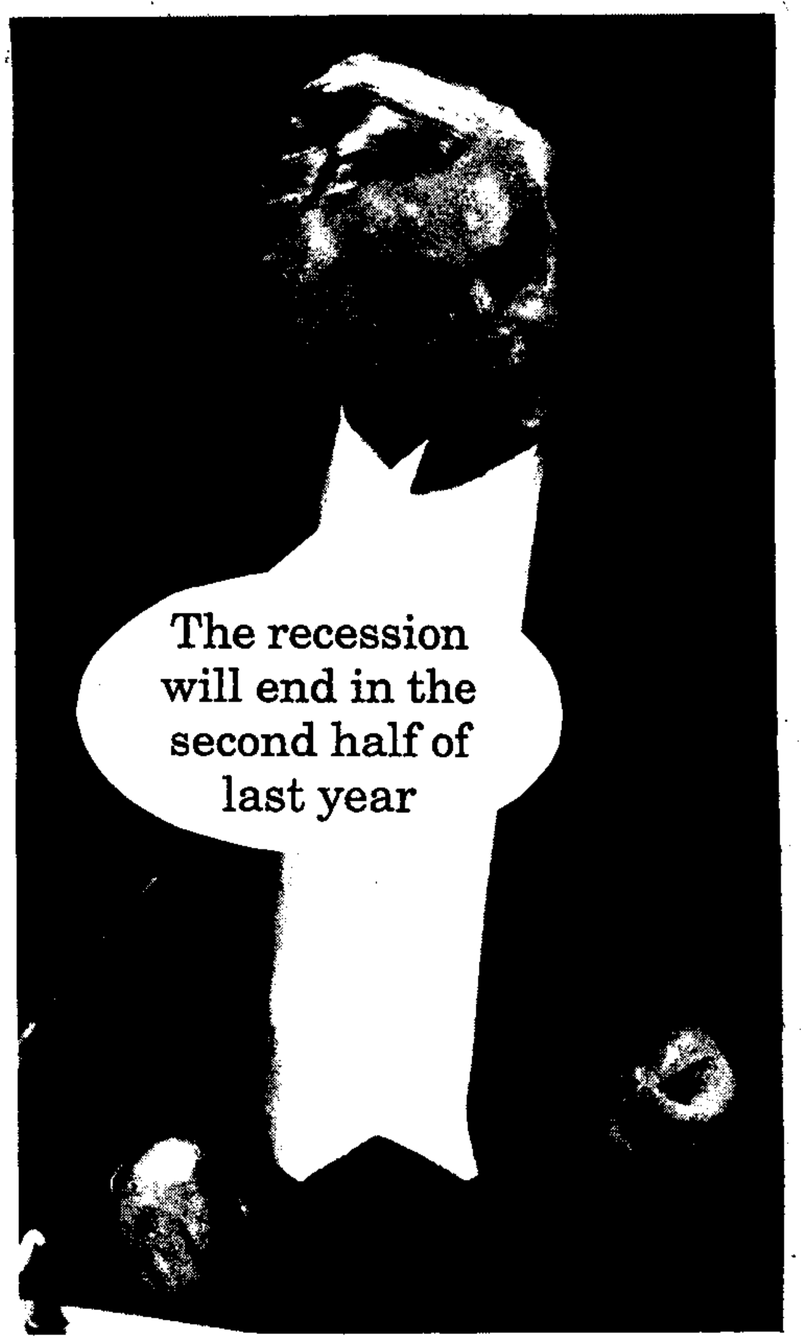
His dream was that the new road through Oxleas Wood, the wonderful highspeed railway line to and from the Channel Tunnel, and the airport — newly authorised to use jets — would make the region irresistible to the Euro-businessman. But shortly before Christmas British Midland, supporters of the Government, said it was pulling out of the airport, from where it has been operating to Brussels.

Only three months ago the Government decided, after a long public inquiry, to allow jets to use the airport, built and operated by Mowlem. This, the company argued, was the way to make it viable. Local objectors protested that they had been promised that it would use only small propeller planes and said it still wouldn't make a profit with the longer runway (see *Eyes passim*).

One expert told the *Eye*: "The airport was wanted as a showcase for Docklands based on the belief that the City would move to Docklands. But it never made a commercial sense from the start and lengthening the runway is just a rescue attempt for a hopeless proposition."

THE decision of the Court of Appeal in the Tower Hamlets election case is a terrible blow for the judge of the election court, John Rowe QC.

At the initial hearing at the election court, Rowe found that a Liberal leaflet which pretended to come from Labour and which promised all sorts of goodies for immigrants (a throw-back to the Smethwick election campaign in 1964 when the



Tories encouraged the chant: "If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour") did not break election law.

Rowe's decision was ridiculed by the Court of Appeal, which ruled the leaflet plainly illegal and sent the case back to Rowe to find "forthwith" for the Labour councillors, to disqualify the Liberal councillors concerned and order them to pay the costs of the case — estimated at £100,000.

Rowe wasn't too "forthwith" about his reaction. He coolly says he will not hear the case until 27 January. He can't possibly do anything before then because, he says, he has urgent legal business to conduct.

FACT: John Rowe is deputy chairman of the Bar Council.

THE DAY before Parliament rose for Christmas, the Commons select committee on home affairs joined the *Eye* in drawing attention to the safety problems still to be resolved in the Channel tunnel. But it did not know just how serious a problem safety is becoming.

In addition to worries about clamping vehicles on to wagons, seismic risk and staffing levels, Dr Herbert Eisner, former director of the Government's Explosion and Flame Laboratory, has found in the course of new research that someone has quietly reduced one vital safety measure.

The tunnel is to have cross-over points enabling passengers, in the event of a fire, to move into the central service tunnel from where they will be taken to safety in another train. In 1963, the Government produced a White Paper, *Cmnd 2137*, which specified that the distance between cross-overs must be reduced from previous plans to a maximum of 250 metres. That was the figure in two plans considered by Parliament and two select committees.

But someone inside the government machine realised that this would put up costs and in 1985 the distance mysteriously became 375 metres, which is where it stands today. "It makes the tunnel much cheaper but the escape route much longer," says Dr Eisner. It reality it could mean a walk of nearly a quarter of a mile along a catwalk, perhaps carrying babies and old people, pursued by smoke and flames.

Will the select committee now open an inquiry to find out who changed the plans without telling Parliament? Watch this space.

'Backbiter'

Grovel

BUBBLES ROTHERMERE has told the world that the reason for the cancellation of her annual Christmas party at Claridge's, traditionally paid for by her estranged husband Vere, was that it was not considered appropriate in the current climate.

However, an alternative explanation has been suggested by insiders at Associated Newspapers. Bubbles apparently turned up late to the recent funeral of her mother-in-law, Lady Blunt, much to the indignation of Lord Rothermere. As a riposte he told her that he would be bringing his mistress, the Korean hand-model Miko Lee, to the Claridge's party. Bubbles responded by saying that two could play at that game and announced that she would be bringing as her escort one of her young gentlemen admirers.

Rothermere promptly cancelled not only the Claridge's bash, but also all the official Christmas parties for the staff of his newspapers, thus leaving ingenious editors to find the necessary funds from their editorial expenses budgets.

I HEAR that Kinnochio's public relations adviser, Philip Gould, has begun to suffer delusions of grandeur.

Recently, the Londoner's Diary in the *Evening Standard* ran a story about how Gould, a parent-governor of the Hallfield primary school in Bayswater, had co-opted his wife Gail Rebuck on to the board of governors in order to block any Tories. Rebuck, who is chief executive of publishers Random Century, is renowned for crunching diamonds between her teeth.

No sooner had the item appeared in print than an irate Gould was on the phone to Londoner's Diary. The reason for his complaint was not that the piece had been inaccurate, but that it had exposed his children to the threat of kidnap. Er...

I AM RELIEVED to hear that the Right Honourable Sir Edward du Cann has at last stumped up the £25,000 he owed for a private collection of Victorian political memorabilia he bought in May (see *Eye* 777). I understand that with legal fees and interest the final bill came out at nearer £30,000. Like Victoria, I doubt Sir Edward was very amused.

"I'm terribly sorry. It's never happened before"

Pseuds Corner

I am quite petite — just 5ft 3in tall — which I am told is the same height as the Venus de Milo.

NATALIA MAKAROVA
Sunday Times

Although their musical styles could hardly be more different, in many ways Mozart's career followed the same pattern as Michael Jackson's. Further, in many ways, he suffered for it just as Jacko has. Both men were musically gifted at a young age. Both men were managed by their fathers and never enjoyed a normal childhood.

JOHNNY BLACK
Insight

But his [Sir Laurens van der Post's] views tend to place him on the political right. Would he agree? He doesn't feel the need to label himself, he says, preferring to "live out his own nature" as well as he can. "I am," he adds, "a leaf on a tree."

This is an impressive remark.

DAVID NICHOLSON-LORD
Independent on Sunday

When I deny myself something, it releases a spark of hope. I could buy a Rolls-Royce, but I won't. In a time when people are starving it would hurt for me to drive it into a neighbourhood where people were having a hard time. I'll have a Range Rover instead.

DONNA SUMMER
Sunday Times

I might be in Memphis talking on the phone to somebody in Los Angeles when I suddenly remember something about a song I was writing three-and-a-half years ago with some kid in Paris. Now the difference between me and a lot of people is that I then put the phone down, find the number of the kid in Paris, ring him up and finish the song. I just discount time."

DAVE STEWART
Arena

Toby Young thought deeply when I asked him to define Modern Review Man.

"He's probably middle-class, probably university educated," he pronounced. "He probably doesn't vote, and travels by public transport, but only because he doesn't have a car.

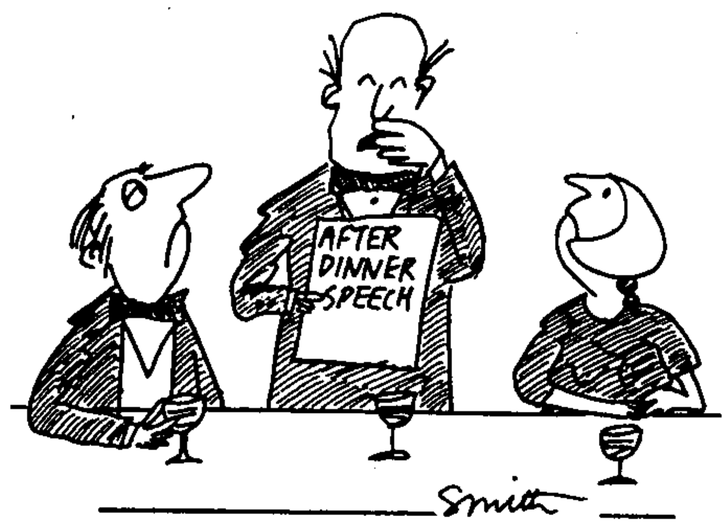
"He is conservative without being sexist or racist, and wears baseball boots and two shirts.

"He eats a lot of junk food, wouldn't be seen dead buying health foods. He *probably* doesn't take drugs — can't afford them — and typically works in the BBC, the media, publishing or academia, although for us ideally he is someone who works in Forbidden Planet."

Mail on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: Caroline Priest, Christopher Whiteley, Anon, Richard Gibbs, Kevin Nolan, E. Strobes.

£10 paid for entries



"Belch... oops! Aaaah... that's better... Great spuds, shame about the service... Fancied the little waitress, though... Hic! Ooooh... Now... where was I? Aahh..."

ROUGHING it in St Albans, I head to the Cinta Restaurant for pre-Christmas refreshment and am appalled when my evening, along with that of 40 or so other peaceful diners is interrupted by the antics of the police.

The local Knackers, who were also having a get-together at the restaurant, had thoughtfully brought along their own amplifying equipment. Their behaviour did not inspire confidence.

Over the loud speakers and for all to hear, the coppers broadcast details of their end-of-year awards ceremony. These included prizes for: Best Excuse for Crashing A Police Car Whilst Not Having Your Blue Light And Siren Switched On; for The Policeman Who Crashed Into An Innocent Motorist On A Roundabout; and another for The Policeman Who Pushed A Dustcart Off The Road.

The evening was topped off by awards for the Worst Written Report and the Most Dubious Arrest. No doubt there was fierce competition in the last category.

WHEN WILL my old friend Jacob Rothschild learn what an undignified spectacle he makes while desperately ingratiating himself with the Princess of Wales?

The recent "Dance for Life" Aids benefit organised by the charity Crusade is a case in point. After the performance, for which everyone concerned had donated their services free, a reception was held at Spencer House, which is owned by Jacob Rothschild.

Dear Jacob did not attend the dance event, but he did charge Crusade £6,000 for the hire of Spencer House, which he claimed was the nominal cost of security and staff.

Yet who should be the first person in the line-up to shake hands with the gorgeous Diana? Why Jacob Rothschild, of course, though I don't suppose he told her he was charging for the use of Spencer House.

● *I SEE that the Indie on Sunday's award-winning interviewer, Lynn Barber, is offering £5 for any dirt on my colleague Richard Ingrams. I offer the following:*

On 10 December, Ingrams was spotted in the Beadle and Wedge, an agreeable Thameside eaterie in Moulsford, Berkshire, in the company of a middle-aged woman with a florid complexion and a squeaky voice.

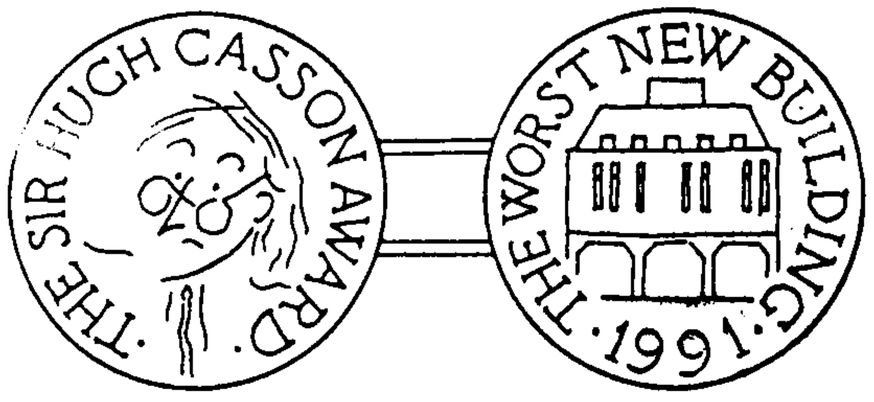
The woman appeared to be asking Ingrams a number of highly personal questions, by which the editor of the Oldie was clearly embarrassed.

Eventually, the woman paid for the lunch and drove Ingrams away in her car — to an unknown destination.

Can I have my fiver please?

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS



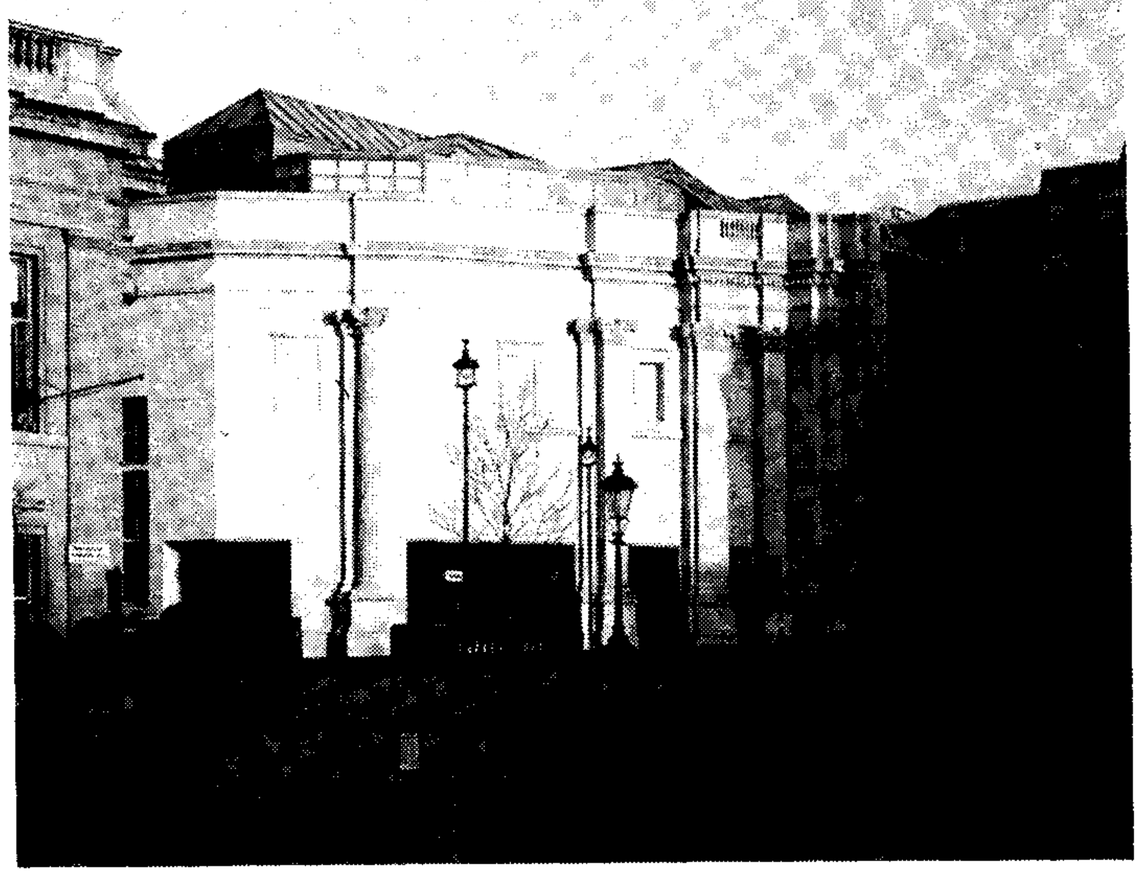
TIME to give out gongs for 1991. To decide on this year's recipient of Britain's most prestigious architectural award, the Sir Hugh Casson Medal, our committee of honour — Lord Palumbo, Simon Jenkins and the late Robert Maxwell — were faced with the usual piles of mediocrity and insensitivity. But one building stood out for raising architectural pretentiousness to new, stratospheric heights. It was, of course, the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery, designed by Mr and Mrs Robert Venturi.

One is reluctant to identify too closely with that remarkable patron of the arts, the late Hermann Goering, but my trigger finger begins to itch when I read that Mr Venturi considers that British critics who have dared to express reservations about the building in Trafalgar Square are "uneducated and uncultured". We must of course understand that Robert Venturi is from Philadelphia, and we have long learned to associate high levels of pomposity, humourlessness and pretension with American academics on the make.

Poor Prince Charles! Is this what it was all for? The reviled "carbuncle" design was indeed awful, but it at least had the merit of architectural coherence. And coherence is the last thing you will find in the elaborate and expensive camp joke foisted on to the poor rich Sainsbury Brothers by Bob and Denise.

Yes, of course the paintings look lovely; but the National Gallery insisted on top lit rooms while the grey colour against which they have been so beautifully hung was chosen by the director, Neil MacGregor, and his curators. Yes, of course the materials used are fine and beautiful; but that, ultimately, is a matter of money. Decking out a structure with dadoes, cornices and columns does not make it architecture.

Let us begin with the exterior. Never mind the side and the back, where the architects' imagination seems to have been so exhausted that they have given us but a brick industrial shed; and never mind the discordant roofscape of unintegrated skylights that



looms above the parapet; it is the facade adjoining the original National Gallery that matters.

Venturi takes William Wilkins's Corinthian order and then makes it dribble away into nothing as the building lurches around the corner in a series of ungainly planes. Worse, the whole aesthetic and structural logic of the Classical orders is subverted by huge, hideous voids which cut into the line of the pedestal and base. The architect describes all this as "both a cadenza and a coda" to Wilkins's admittedly mediocre neo-Classical pile, but that is merely a pseudish alibi for the fact that the new building is as ugly as it is incoherent.

But Mr Venturi, of course, as the inventor of post-Modernism, cannot bear to do Classicism straight, any more than he will do Modernism straight. Everything must be done with arch, self-conscious "irony" to show how clever and knowledgeable he is. The same is true of the interior.

For no apparent reason other than vain perversity, Venturi skewed the plan of his wing, so that its geometry corresponds neither with the grid of the original building nor with the line of Whitcomb Street. But this skew allows the creation of two Bernini-esque tapering and diminishing perspectives. One is in the main staircase which rises from the low, formless entrance hall; the other continues the central axis of the National Gallery.

The trouble with such optical tricks is that when you look along them the other way, the vista looks shorter instead of longer. And when you look back along Venturi's axis, you also see that his columns are but shams, not connecting with the walls, and that his pompous arches painfully collide with dropped flat ceilings.

For our Bob, all these infelicities are "Mannerist acknowledgements" of the context created by Renaissance pictures, for in our fractured culture he thinks it is wrong to do Classicism seriously — even if he could, which he clearly cannot. Venturi's only form of architectonic originality is, therefore, to be inept.

But Bob likes playing games: his heroes are Mannerists like Borromini, Hawksmoor and Lutyens, whom he celebrated in his clever, necessary (and good) book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, which made his name. And there's the trouble. Venturi knows a lot and he has been around; so the Sainsbury Wing is full of references (why?), to Bernini, to Labrouste, to Thomson, to Paxton, to Lutyens, etc etc. But Venturi is clearly incapable of combining and transmuting these ideas into that coherent, integrated whole which is architecture.

"Architecture," claimed Le Corbusier, "is the masterly, correct and magnificent play of masses brought together in light... great primary forms... are beautiful forms, the most beautiful forms." While for Palladio, "Beauty will result from the form and correspondence of the whole, with respect to the several parts, of the parts with regard to each other, and of these again to the whole; that the structure may appear an entire and compleat body..."

Either definition will do, for I am afraid that by such cultured standards the Sainsbury Wing is not really architecture at all, just an eclectic melange of ideas, in-jokes and clever quotes represented in three-dimensional form. This already dated period piece cannot be perceived or understood on a purely aesthetic level, for everything must be elaborately explained. It is the Built Word, the quintessence of Tectonic Pseudery, which can only justify itself by the self-fulfilling prophesies of the avant-garde view of history.

In one of his many stormy meetings with the building committee, Venturi complained: "You don't seem to understand that I'm a genius!" Sorry Bob, you ain't.

'Piloti'

INVESTMENT

WESTERN firms eager for rich pickings in eastern Europe are settling down nicely in the Wild West atmosphere behind what used to be the Iron Curtain.

Far from prying London eyes in Czechoslovakia, for example, investment consultants Robert Fleming appear to have "gone native".

They are busy setting up a joint-venture investment fund with the Investicni bank, which like all domestic banks is still state-owned. The fund is trying hard — and with some success — to dominate the market in taking people's "vouchers", which can be transformed into shares in the forthcoming privatisation of Czecho's state-owned industry.

Sadly, competing investment funds, some with equally "reputable" western involvement, find that their applications for approval by the Ministry of Privatisation in Prague keep getting "lost".

FACT: Dusan Triska, the finance ministry official in charge of voucher privatisation, and Jan Vodicka, the official at the Czech privatisation ministry who approves applications to set up investment funds, both sit on the board of the Flemings joint venture.

INTELLIGENCE

JAMES "Toady" Adams, the *Sunday Times*'s mustachioed defence expert, is second to none in his devotion to MI5, the SAS, the CIA and other such outfits.

Eye readers will recall that when James Rusbridger challenged the official account of the Gibraltar shootings in his book *The Intelligence Game*, Adams sent him a letter of rebuke. "I think putting about such theories does neither those groups [SAS and MI5] nor the country as a whole any service," Toady complained.

How odd, then, to see a new novel called *The Final Terror*, written by the selfsame James "Toady" Adams. His preface emphasises that, though the book is fiction, "the tactics used by special forces, the workings of the intelligence communities and the relationship between governments and their spies are closely based on reality".

The author does add that nothing in the book will be of any use to terrorists. However, as he well knows, his chums at the Ministry of Defence insist that publication of *any* information about spooks is dangerous. *The Intelligence Game*, which Adams considered such a threat to national security, actually omitted the Gower Street address of MI5 at the request of Rear-Admiral William Higgins of the D-Notice Committee; even though the building was well-known, the Admiral explained, it should not be given "undue publicity" since this might invite terrorist attacks. But what do we find in Adams's book? "The private dining room of the Director-General of the British Security Services, otherwise known as MI5, lies on the fifth floor of their headquarters in Gower Street in London... Out of the lift and thirty paces along the corridor past plain brown doors, the DG's office with his two secretaries..." And so on for many pages.

Oddly, the normally watchful Admiral Higgins has made no attempt to have *The Final Terror* altered. This can surely have nothing to do with the fact that Toady's attitude to the security services is entirely uncritical — can it?

TV

The Oprah Winfrey Show
(Channel 4)

THE END may be in sight for *Wogan*, but the barrage of TV chat continues regardless. Jonathan Ross, Clive Anderson, Michael Aspel, those poor sad specimens on *The Word*, Miriam Stoppard looking shell-shocked on *People Today*, Mr and Mrs Married looking married on *Good Morning* and Alan Titchmarsh in a suit on *Pebble Mill at One* are all still droning for Britain, and pausing for breath only to introduce the next guest, who's just arrived in a cab after recording another chat show somewhere else.

Desperation, you feel, is beginning to set in, mainly in the form of an increasing number of novelty acts — people juggling poultry or eating telephone directories in two minutes. The chat show in its traditional form, it seems, is all but talked out.

Fortunately, Terry Wogan's seemingly boundless need for holidays — to be properly satisfied next June, when his holiday becomes permanent — occasionally breathes life into the old format, and the rumour that his next temporary replacement is to be Oprah Winfrey, the reigning American queen of blather, is likely to stir things up a bit. Her show, which garners huge rating in the States, currently runs two afternoons a week on Channel 4 and makes intriguing viewing.

For this is, to use the latest cliché, "tabloid television" — slick, vulgar and quite astonishingly unBritish. But although it started as an alternative to traditional chat shows, featuring "real people" instead of the usual celebs, it's now so popular that celebs are queuing up to appear on it. Sometimes you wonder why. Compared to the dead-eyed twinklings of Wogan or Aspel, it's like being thrown to the lions.

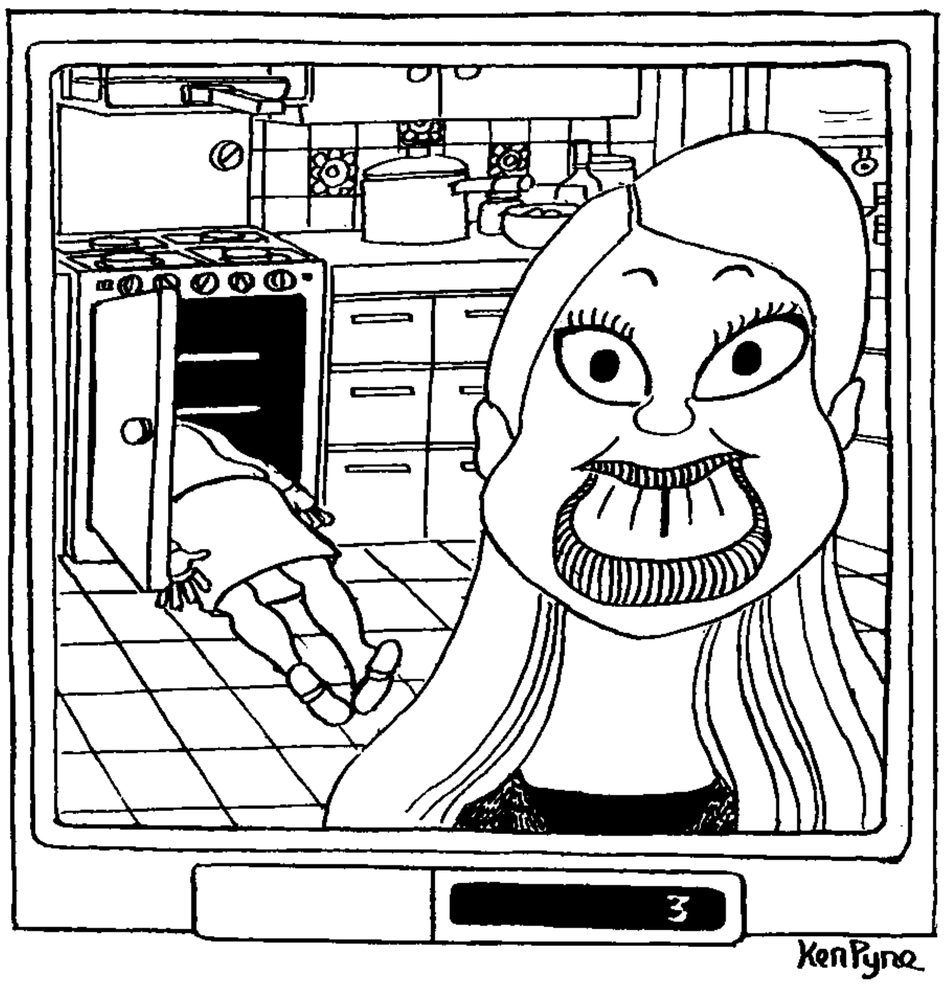
Oprah herself stands in among the audience for most of the time, and leaves her guests to fend for themselves. "Real people" guests usually have what characters in *Dallas* used to call "prahblems", and have come on TV to show off about them. Family arguments, poverty, lawyers, divorces and, of course, disastrous cosmetic surgery are regular subjects. Virtually everyone turns out to have been abused as a child. Most people cry. All are quite incredibly ugly.

Celebs are usually there to plug their latest books or films, but most of them turn out to have been abused as children too. Here the mood is usually more benign; the audience generally adore the guests of the day, and if they don't, they do a very good impersonation of it. Last week Kathleen Turner received a hysterical welcome, and a few weeks before the cast of *Dynasty* were given such an ovation it was a surprise when no member of the audience spontaneously combusted.

At the centre of it all, Oprah herself — calm, full of charm and currently grappling with her own "prahblem", presumably caused by an excess of cream buns. Watching her subtly controlling the mood of the show is to watch a true professional at work, and her skill is such that you don't notice it unless you're really looking for it. The audience inevitably are right behind her, whooping with joy or seething with anger, depending on what she wants them to do.

British critics tend to sneer at all this, regarding Oprah's brand of populism with a certain Anglo-Saxon disdain. Nonetheless, it is very entertaining. Her greatest quality is one she shares, incongruously, with Clive Anderson — she's not remotely showbiz. Over here, we have to go upmarket to overcome such blandness; in the States, they have to go downmarket. Oprah on *Wogan*, if it ever happens, could make chat shows worth watching again.

'Couch Potato'



"...and that's another one I've converted to gas!"

MEDIA NEWS

NEXT TIME Richard Attenborough bumps into Terry Wogan there's every prospect of their having an interesting discussion on Irish business techniques.

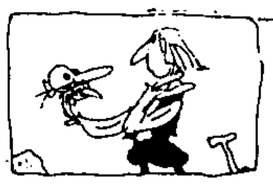
Last month Attenborough announced that Capital Radio was writing off its £2 million investment in Century Communications, a Dublin-based broadcaster which boasted Wogan and the singer Chris De Burgh as directors, alongside various business figures generally regarded as sympathetic to the discredited Charles Haughey regime.

Century, the holder of Ireland's national commercial radio franchise, went off the air on 19 November, just 16 months after the optimistic Londoners took a 30 percent stake in the company. Happily, within days one of the station's co-founders, Oliver Barry, announced that it would be broadcasting again just in time to retain all those lucrative Christmas ad campaigns.

Wogan and De Burgh agreed to back the resurrected service, but not Capital which, apart from its lost equity, is owed substantial sums for services provided to the original Century over the last year. Unfortunately the plan, which would have gained its promoters potentially large revenue without the worry of all those liabilities incurred through past trading, collapsed after one of the company's backers decided to take legal action in the hope of recouping his investment.

The prospect of litigation involving, among others, the Irish government and rival broadcasters finally persuaded Century's directors to pull the plug, and its franchise is being re-advertised. Now the station's former staff are pondering their chances of seeing any of the six figure sum owed for wages and expenses.

Wogan and his fellow investors are waiting to see the size of bids for the station's equipment and studios, which were advertised last weekend. The proceeds are not expected to significantly cover the £5-6 million costs of the failed venture.



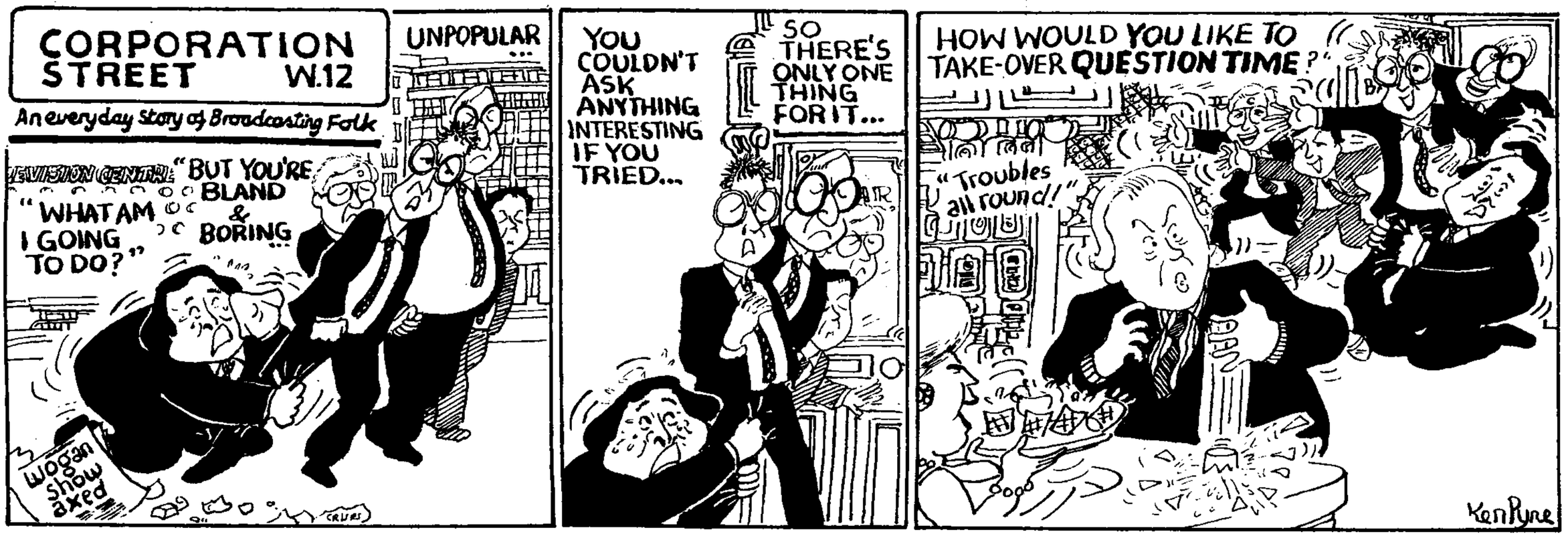
LUVVIES

She [Juliet Stevenson] dreads every performance, and at seven o'clock each night feels she is at the foot of an enormous mountain. But without the fear, she worries that she might slip into automatic. "Every performance has to be a live event — otherwise the audience might as well see a movie. If it's not a live event it's not theatre because that's what defines theatre — it's particular power and glory."

Guardian

Submitted by Richard Lewisohn.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 for contributions.


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
UNPOPULAR...
"WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?"
"BUT YOU'RE BLAND & BORING..."
Wogan show axed
CRUSE
YOU COULDN'T ASK ANYTHING INTERESTING IF YOU TRIED...
SO THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT...
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE-OVER QUESTION TIME?"
"Troubles all round!"
Ken Pyne

I-BSkyB

Not a lot of people know that Michael Caine has a satellite TV dish.

His Oxfordshire home is one of 2.7 million in Britain that now have satellite or cable TV — along with those of 007 star Roger Moore, comedian Bob Monkhouse and ex-Chancellor Nigel Lawson.

There is a dish at the Dallas-style Berkshire mansion of Prince Andrew and Fergie. And on the royal yacht Britannia.

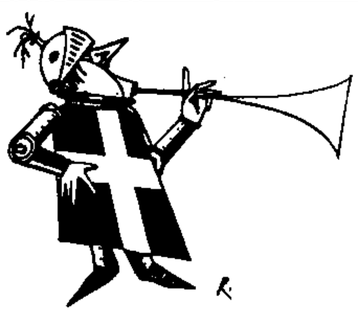
CHARLES CATCHPOLE
The Sun

To be honest I haven't watched the BBC and ITV much since the arrival of Sky. The BBC has become a bit dull.

MICHAEL WINNER
The Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Al Duprés, Anon.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.



CROOK

IN 1985 Robert Maxwell issued a writ for libel against the *Eye* over an article about the *Mirror* Ethiopian Appeal Fund, which stated that Ethiopian embassy officials were anxious that money from the fund was not being distributed and instead was earning interest in a bank account.

In Cap'n Bob's view, the article implied that he was skimming off the interest, whereas the *Eye* had intended to suggest nothing more than that the movement of monies to the point of need was, in the circumstances of the famine, unreasonably slow.

Co-plaintiff with Cap'n Bob and the fund itself was the fund's administrator, Neil Bentley, and the action was eventually settled on the basis that the *Eye* apologised and paid £5,000 in damages. During the course of the action, we obtained a document "on discovery" which appeared to suggest that Cap'n Bob had made a modest profit out of the fund. But documents obtained on discovery — ie as part of the civil legal process — must not be used for any purpose other than the specific legal action out of which discovery arose. To disclose such a document is to invite prosecution for contempt, so the *Eye* had its hands tied.

Since Cap'n Bob's death, however, and in the light of the revelations about the pension frauds, the *Daily Star* has probed the appeal fund and discovered the transaction of which we had been made aware a few years back.

Of the £1.8 million donated by *Daily Mirror* readers to the Ethiopian Appeal Fund, £52,357 was paid to booksellers Bumpus, Haldane & Maxwell — a Maxwell subsidiary — for technical books supplied to the University of Addis Ababa's School of Water Engineering. It was one of the company's largest items of turnover for that year. And of this sum, approximately £20,000 represented the profit to the company from the deal. Not only this, but some of the technical books happened to be published by Pergamon and other companies owned by Maxwell, none of whom supplied the books at cost. At the same time, though, Maxwell was persuading others to provide goods and services to the fund at cost. The fund was never registered as a charity, and it was run by Neil Bentley, who reported directly to Maxwell.

Bentley told the *Daily Star* that the directors of Bumpus were "afraid of a midnight call from Maxwell if they cut prices or failed to achieve financial targets. Like most of us, they were men with mortgages."

NEWS OF THE SCREW-UPS

THE *Eye* has often commented on the close relationship between the Metropolitan Police and the leader of the world's gutter press, the *News of the World* (editor Patsy Chapman). And nothing illustrates the importance of that relationship better than the recent criminal case of R. v Thompson and others.

Heard at the Old Bailey in November, the case had been heralded a year earlier in a *News of the Screws* "Crime Scoop" splashed across the front page under the typically modest headline WE SMASH IRA PASSPORT PLOT.

The article, by Chris Boffey, reported that the *Screws* had "smashed a terrifying plot to supply the IRA with hundreds of blank British passports". For this the rag received due praise from the police. Det Chief Supt Tony Comben was quoted as saying: "The *News of the World* has shown great responsibility as a newspaper." He modestly described his investigation as "a very significant and major inquiry with international implications".

The key figure in the case was an imaginative burglar called Paul Thompson. He was serving five years in Gloucester prison when he tempted a senior prison officer, Brian Lane, with large quantities of counterfeit dollars, which, promised Thompson, could be secured cheap from a gang in Hereford.

Lane and his son fell for the idea and parted with £3,000; but the dollars never materialised — indeed they never existed. Somehow Thompson persuaded the Lanes to part with another £10,000 which was lent to them by a builder called Andrew Kent. When, once again, the fake dollars did not materialise, Kent visited Thompson in Gloucester prison and demanded to know the identify of the Hereford gang.

Thompson said he could sort the whole matter out if he could get out of prison, so prison officer Lane arranged with the governor for "compassionate leave". Thompson then took Kent to see three old buddies in Hereford and together they conned him that the fake dollars would soon be available. Kent parted with another three grand, but never got the dollars.

Thompson didn't return to prison after his leave. On the run from the police, the Lanes and from Kent, he was desperate. He arranged for a false passport to be supplied by a burglar from Manchester, Eric Allison. Then he rang the *News of the World*.

He told ace reporter Boffey that Andrew Kent was a link-man with the IRA, and that he was masterminding an operation to secure passports for IRA terrorists at £3,000 a time. He said his life was in danger from these terrorists, and, to prove his story, offered to fix up a "meet" with the "Irishman" in suitably absurd surroundings.

Boffey did what any responsible *News of the World* investigator would do in the circumstances. He promised Thompson £9,000 for his story, gave him a few hundred on account and phoned Scotland Yard. The police, of course, were fascinated and supplied Boffey with a detective to pretend to work as part of the gang. A "meet" was arranged in a wood near Hampstead Heath in which Thompson and the undercover policeman talked to Andrew Kent about supplying counterfeit dollars.

As a result, further meetings were set up. At these meetings prison officer Lane, his son and a friend, three members of the Hereford gang, Andrew Kent, Eric Allison, the passport supplier, and four other assorted friends and associates were arrested and charged with conspiracy. Thompson was arrested separately.

News of the World photographers were present at all the arrests. The issue of 18 November 1990 carried photographs of the conspirators being hauled away. Boffey's article — I JOIN POLICE DRESSED UP LIKE WAITERS IN RAID — described Andrew Kent as "The Irishman" and suggested he was working for the IRA. For months the paper continued to boast about the IRA plot it had "smashed".

NEWS OF THE WORLD

When the case came to court last November, a year later, the facts were rather different from those that had appeared so prominently in the *News of the World*. There was no reference in the prosecution case to the IRA or indeed to any Irish or terrorist connection. Andrew Kent, "the Irishman" in Boffey's story, had a broad Gloucestershire accent and had no connection with Ireland, the IRA or terrorism. There had been no IRA passport plot for the *News of the World* to smash.

All this was complete fantasy, it emerged in court when the police were ordered by the judge to provide to the defence the texts of all Thompson's interviews. It was clear from early on that Thompson was a nutter and a fantasist.

The climax to the whole case came when Thompson sent a note to the judge saying he had received death threats and asking, in the event of his death, for his ashes to be scattered over Cumbria. By now everyone in court realised Thompson was quite off his trolley — everyone, that is, except the faithful Boffey who reported the "death threats" in the *News of the World* and earned himself a rebuke from the judge.

The trial was an expensive disaster for the prosecution. The Lanes had pleaded guilty, as had Kent, to a minor charge. But of the seven people who stood trial only one, Eric Allison, was found guilty — and that on the minor charge of providing a false passport.

The *News of the World* went on reporting that Kent had kidnapped Thompson at gunpoint outside Gloucester jail though Kent had been acquitted of that several days previously, and that Allison had been convicted of the major charge of which he had in fact been cleared.

Everyone else was acquitted. It was a sad end to what the *News of the World* had claimed as a great crime scoop and what Scotland Yard had heralded as "a major and very dangerous inquiry with international implications".

MUSEUM NEWS

SIR Nicholas Goodison, former head of the Stock Exchange and chairman of the Trustee Savings Bank, has pulled off a splendid deal. He has arranged the sale to the Courtauld Institute of an 18th century clock, made by Matthew Boulton, for the handsome sum of £450,000.

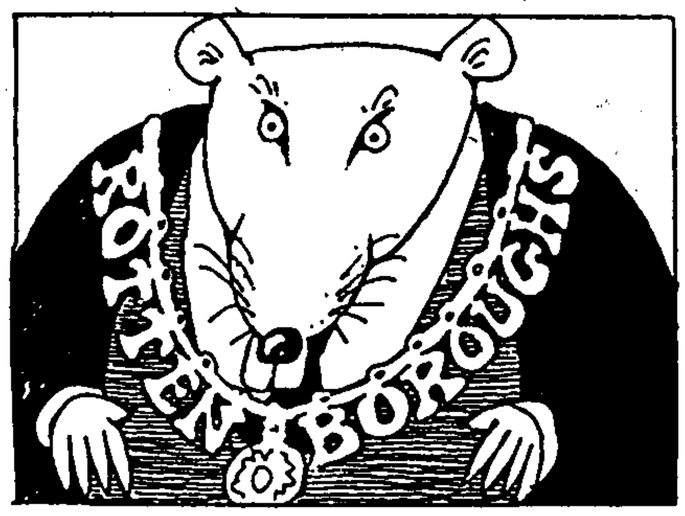
Setting prices for antiques and works of art is notoriously difficult, but eyebrows have been raised at this figure. Some expert observers suggest a price of £100,000 might have been nearer the mark.

Why did the Courtauld need this expensive clock when it can't even afford proper air conditioning for its marvellous collection of Old Masters and Impressionists? Well, the Courtauld occupies Somerset House, of which the architect was Sir William Chambers; and Chambers also designed the clock. Sir Nicholas Goodison is the author of the standard book on Matthew Boulton, so his interest in the clock is natural, too. Oh, and Sir Nicholas is chairman of the Courtauld Institute.

Sir Nicholas is also chairman of the National Art Collections Fund, which gave £100,000 for the purchase. Other money was raised from his contacts among the great and the good (such as the Wolfson Foundation, which gave £35,000). But the biggest contribution — £240,000 — came from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, an independent quango financed by the government. Oh, and Sir Nicholas Goodison is a trustee of the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

As luck would have it, Sir Nicholas is the owner of a very similar clock by Boulton (his version is illustrated on the front cover of his book). The high price for the version bought by the Courtauld fixes a high valuation on the clock owned by Sir Nicholas — which, since it has never been tested in the market-place, might otherwise be worth a good deal less.

Naturally, there is no suggestion that Goodison deliberately over-valued the Courtauld's clock so as to boost the value of his own; nevertheless, a happy consequence of his deal is that he now has a nice nest-egg for his old age.



PRESTON

DESPITE the worldwide collapse of socialism, it continues to thrive in Preston, Lancashire, the greyest town in Britain's greyest county.

The ugly face of the 1980s-style London "loony left" has re-surfaced in the form of ex-GLC wimmin's committee chair Valerie "Olive Oyl" Wise. The peripatetic Wise, daughter of Preston MP Audrey, has laid low since Thatch sacked County Hall in 1986. But now she fancies her chances of joining Red Ken Livingstone, Paul Boeteng and other former colleagues at Westminster.

Although she only arrived 'oop north just over a year ago, Wise has made much progress. She has been elected to the local district Labour Party and Preston trades council, representing both the Tee & Bee (the usual hack's conduit) and the shopworkers' union, USDAW. She has also become constituency women's officer (how the mighty have fallen!)

But the gruff, greyhound-breeding Labour faithful decided they'd had enough when Olive Oyl became a council candidate for a borough ward. Her selection for the Central seat has sparked off scenes of Murkeyside-like hostility. Now, the party's ever-busy North West regional office has intervened after locals complained that Wise had been chosen, suspiciously, from a shortlist of one — incumbent councillor Veronica Afrin having been cold-shouldered — and supporters were accused of rail-roading the selection meeting.

This gives regional office a bit of a headache. While party chiefs obviously want to prevent Preston from becoming a plaything of failed London left wannabees, they are still reeling from the onslaught of Operation Angel, last summer's fraud squad raid on the council's hard-right Labour leadership when Inspector Knacker of the Lancashire force called in on the homes of several top town hall figures, including former deputy leader Frank McGrath, taking away several bundles of documents.

Interestingly enough, last month Knacker announced that his team was also looking into the affairs of local MPs Robert Atkins, the sports minister, and Sir Peter Blaker, whose secretly-taped conversations of how they had been financing an investigation into Preston-based socialist millionaire Owen Oyston were recently revealed in the *Eye*.

Coincidentally, the unseated incumbent in Central ward-Valerie Wise battle, Coun Veronica Afrin, runs a hotel for the much-investigated Frank McGrath.

BURY

IMPOVERISHED citizens in Bury, Greater Manchester, who are taking their Labour-run council to court claiming it was "negligent" in investing with the Bank of Credit and Commerce International have been horrified to learn that town hall leaders are going to waste even more public money paying m'learned friends to *defend* the action.

Bury, already Britain's poorest metropolitan borough, is £6½ million down thanks to its finance officers' ludicrous insistence that nobody had warned them public money would be at risk with BCCI. Rather than cut its losses and help BCCI-stung charge-payers by accepting blame for the investment when it reaches court, Bury is paying an undisclosed sum, believed to be near £100,000, to a Manchester law firm, Alexander Tathum & Co, to defend charges of negligence.

Interestingly, the "people" are being represented by lawyers from Burton Copeland, who are also currently acting for fallen financier Peter Clowes. And guess who is representing Clowes' impoverished investors in the current marathon court battle? None other than Alexander, Tathum & Co.

Astute locals claim the council has hired the latter firm purely out of spite for their choosing Burton Copeland. And they want to know why Bury hasn't followed the example of the Western Isles and sacked those responsible for the cock-up, including finance director Brian Smallbrain and chief executive Peter Burton.

The folly of Bury's investment is already beginning to show. The interest the council would have gained on the £6½ million investment worked out at about £700,000 a year. Bury recently announced that three old peoples' homes would have to close to save an identical sum — until a 20,000-name petition persuaded it otherwise.

Instead the council is now axing 600 jobs to make up for the lost revenue. At that rate the only town hall staff who will still be in place when the negligence action comes to court will be the borough solicitors — and they're none too happy that an outside firm has landed the BCCI action.

STAFFORDSHIRE

THE *Guardian*, the social workers' Bible, has finally caught up with some of the more bizarre issues raised by the Staffordshire pin-down controversy.

In its home news section on 19 December, under the heading Pindown chief "ran web of companies", the *Grauniad* revealed that pin-down instigator and Staffs social worker Tony Latham ran a web of companies which netted more than £153,000 in council contracts over a six-year period.

Guardian readers who also take the *Eye* must have checked their diaries to see whether the last 18 months had really occurred. For the *Eye* detailed Latham's commercial activities, Fundwell, back in May 1990.

So why the *Guardian*'s untimely intervention? The paper can now hide behind the publication of a report by the district auditor following an investigation into Fundwell. But sadly its fearless social services staff have failed to spot a number of errors and omissions with which the report is liberally sprinkled, doubtless to catch out unwitting hacks.

The report claims that it was instigated following county council pressure in September 1990. In fact, the DA only began investigating thanks to the singleminded efforts of Staffordshire Liberal councillor Christina Jebb five months earlier. If it had been up to the Labour-run council, pin-down would still be hushed-up.

HAVERING

LAST JUNE, outlining the cheery East End rags-to-riches story of removal king and Havering Tory councillor Albie Tebbutt, the *Eye* reported how he had deployed heavy "persuasion" tactics to convince bleary-eyed Romfordians that they should ignore his lorries' 5am manoeuvres.

All went quiet while Inspector Knacker of EastEnders police investigated allegations that Tebbutt's remonstrations with complaining locals had been too enthusiastic — and, lo and behold, at the beginning of December Tebbutt was given a four-month suspended jail sentence for attacking a Romford resident!

The resident, a 58-year-old Mr George Turner, who had objected to Tebbutt's company's expansion into green belt land, also happened to be chairman of the local Crow Lane Residents' Association. Antagonism between the sleepless Crow Laners and Tebbutt came to a head last April when Tebbutt called on Turner to "reason" their differences, as he put it.

Mr Turner, however, saw events somewhat differently, claiming in court that Tebbutt had "punched me in the face. I fell to the ground... The next thing I was aware of I was being kicked in between the legs and in the ribs."

Tebbutt has never been forgiven by Crow Laners for the unusual way he dealt with a council order against the removal firm, Wren, to stop making a racket at sunrise in a residential area. As the then vice-chairman of Havering's planning committee and owner of the Copsey removal firm, Tebbutt approved the enforcement notice. Remarkably, within weeks, Tebbutt's firm had bought Wren for half-a-million pounds. He then promptly ignored his own notices!

The political career of Tebbutt, the entrepreneurial, ageing Essex wide-boy, is now in tatters and he has been suspended from the Conservative group, the second largest on the hung council. Cynics suggest, however, that his antics make him a positive electoral asset in the pit-bull infested lowlands around the London-Essex border.

BIRMINGHAM

THE APPALLING regime running Birmingham's top security Pentlands unit for dangerous and disturbed teenagers could finally be at an end after a mass break out by all its inmates and their getaway on a bus.

The escape happened when the four boys hammered a window from the wall, complete with frame and security grille.

Pentlands is part of the infamous St John's Children's Home (remember the escape of the boy who hid in a hostess trolley and was pushed outside by the unit?), and in the latest escape the five staff responsible for the boys' 24-hour supervision were in the staff room drinking coffee.

Fortunately staff in another unit spotted the lads running out and a mass Keystone Cops-style chase followed with social workers and escapees weaving in and out of traffic. Three were caught but the fourth, a rent boy locked up for his own protection, is still on the streets.

Social services director Adrianne Jones and social services committee chairwoman Councillor Najma Hafeez have had to acknowledge the seriousness of this one by calling in the Social Services Inspectorate and informing the Home Office. Unit head Julie Orage has been suspended and principal Tony Myers is on "sick leave".

Jebb was so worried about Latham's commercial contracts with his own social services department that she contacted Inspector Knacker of the Staffordshire fraud squad and contacted the DA. The district auditor now finds that Latham's Fundwell records were "totally inadequate... failure to take appropriate action was at best a recipe for embarrassment for council members and officers and at worst provided opportunities for serious maladministration."

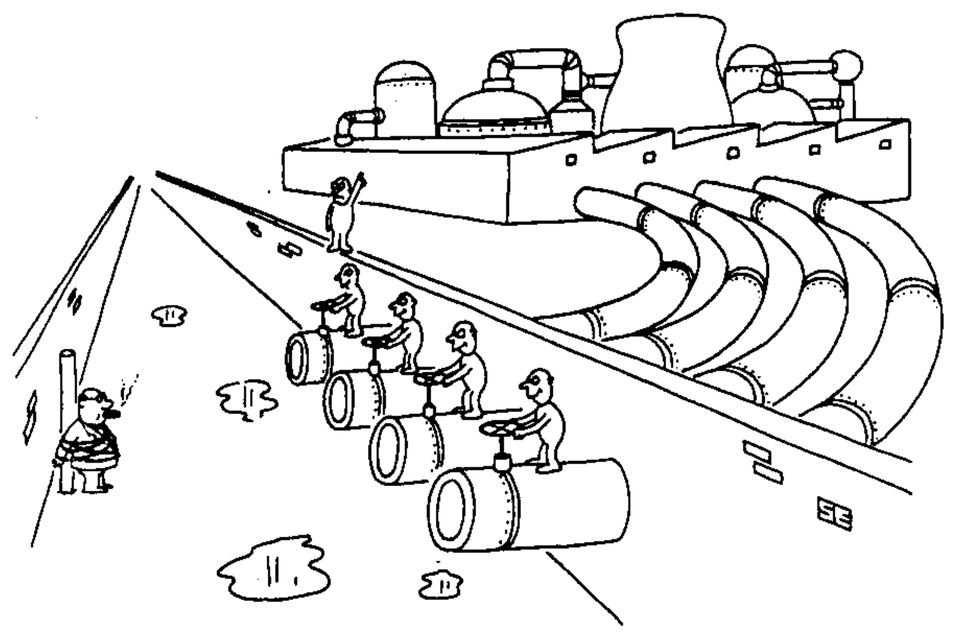
Surprisingly, the DA's report fails to mention that eventually only a mere £6,500 was found unaccounted for. Latham, meanwhile, is still suspended on full pay.

HUSBAND

You're through to 'Call Nick Ross' go ahead....
Nick Ross is a Slimey Toerag. and his bottoms.....
Er.. sorry thats not what we mean by 'Call Nick Ross' actually

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'



OLD MUCK'S report of the imminent demise of the Thames Ditton milk moguls was sadly premature. An extraordinary alignment of political forces has conspired to protect the Milk Marketing Board's archaic monopoly powers.

As a result, pinta drinkers will continue to be ripped off to the tune of £500 million a year in unjust levies, the cash being stuffed into the coffers of the big dairy companies.

The latest Houdini-like escape follows a European Court ruling that threatened to end the board's market-rigging activities. For all the hype about Britain being the EC member to stick by the rules, John Major's Government decided not to back the court but to let the milk bosses off the hook.

In the Cabinet debate, Subsidy Minister John Gummer was all for obeying the court order. But former Subsidy Minister John MacGregor raised the spectre of red-faced dairy farmers herding heifers up the country's high streets on the eve of a general election. Any thought of implementing European law vanished with the sherry.

Hopes that the European Commission might seek special measures to ensure UK compliance have also been dashed. On the road to Maastricht, Jacques Delors had been fearful of taking any further action that might have inflamed the British tabloids.

So against expectations, the board is left free to go on milking consumers for another year or two.

THE FAT-CATS at Thames Ditton have parted company with former chief executive Charles Runge, reportedly by mutual consent.

Word reaches the steading, however, that the amiable Runge was fed up being treated like the board's cowman. Whenever the farmers got down to discussing policy he was asked to leave the room.

The board, meanwhile, appears to have shot itself in the foot again. The MMB's wholly-owned manufacturing division Dairy Crest has continued making skimmed milk powder for subsidised export this Christmas, even though the action led to a shortfall of bottled milk and cream on the home market.

Why the board should have so flagrantly disregarded the public interest is hard to fathom. Could it be that chairman Bob Steven himself wished to demonstrate the lunacy of the milk monopoly in order to drag his own backwoodsmen into the 1990s?

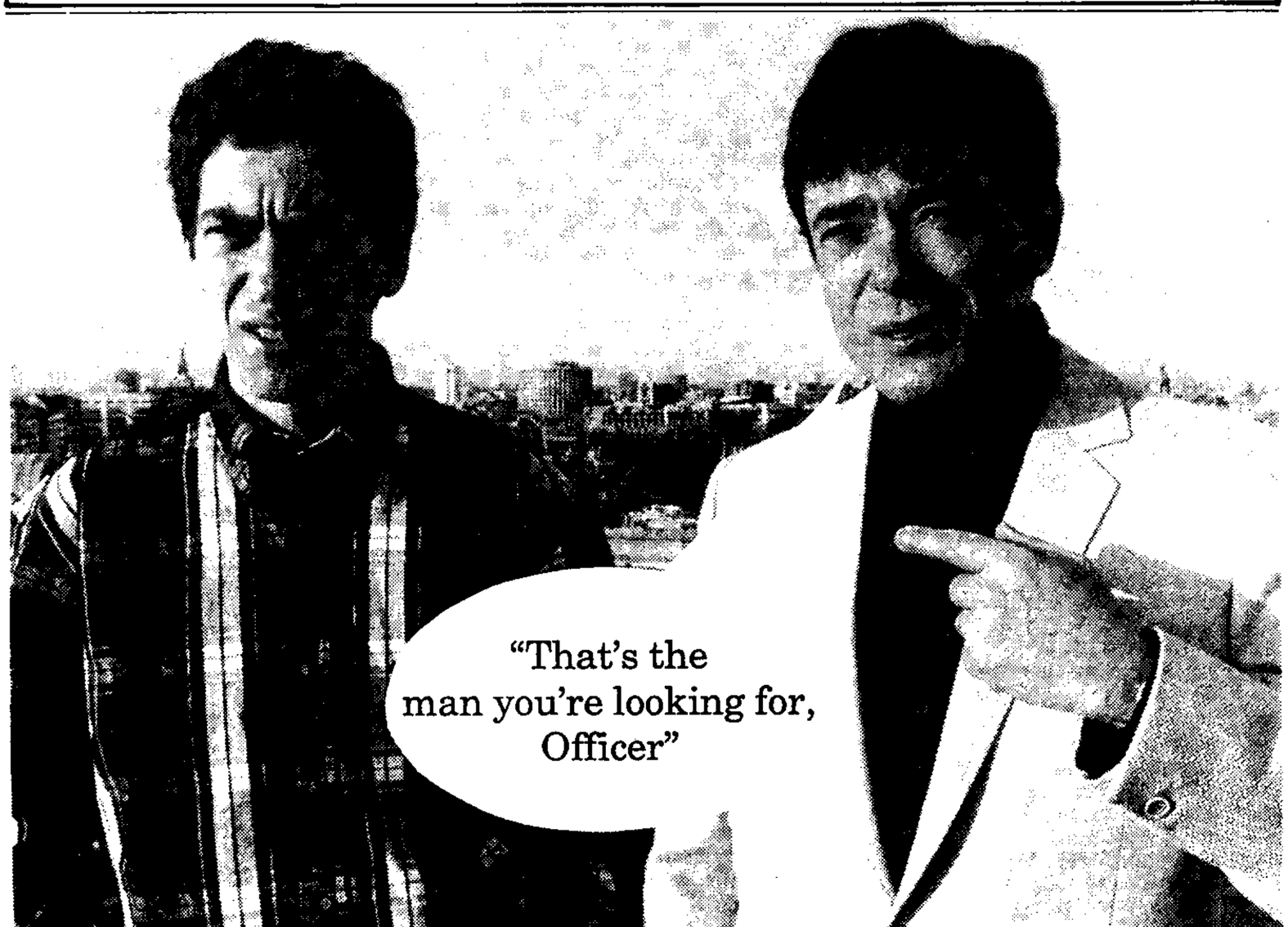
THE National Farmers' Union, once hailed as the most influential lobby in Britain, has won another impressive victory. In alliance with its chums in the pesticide industry, the Barley Barons of Knightsbridge brought all their might to bear on a truly fearsome opponent: a kiddies' comic called *Green Bug*.

The comic, available through Tesco supermarkets, aimed to take a child's eye look at environmental issues. Among the characters featured was Farmer Wacks-Jackett, a near clone of the average NFU council member.

What made the barons angrier than if their subsidies had been cut was the depiction of Wacks-Jackett as a wealthy, spray-happy tyrant. Among the more shocking illustrations were drawings showing the character driving a Range Rover and spraying noxious substances from an aircraft.

Disgraceful, stormed the yeomen of Surplus House. It's well known farmers all drive round in six-year old Ford Fiestas. As for spraying noxious substances on their crops — what nonsense.

Faced by the onslaught Tesco caved in. The company has withdrawn the offending comic and is reportedly "embarrassed" by the accident. Meanwhile the Knightsbridge Wacks-Jacketts celebrate another resounding victory.



YOUR FAVOURITE TORIES ON TAPE

AS THE Owen Oyston Affair (see *Eyes passim*) rumbles on, Tim Mitchell, a former research assistant to Phillip Oppenheim MP who now works for Conservative Central Office, is emerging as another active participant in attempts to smear the socialist millionaire.

In a further tape provided to the *Eye*, Mitchell tells Preston-based Michael Murrin, the man hired by a coven of Tories to look into Oyston's affairs, how they would orchestrate questions concerning Oyston and Derbyshire County Council via the use of letters and the local press.

Mitchell, who now works for Sir Tom Arnold, seems elated by the attacks on Oyston and cautions Murrin, saying that "patience is the name of the game in and out of Parliament".

Oppenheim, Mitchell's former boss, took a big interest in Oyston and Derbyshire council leader David Bookbinder. Murrin was told by Sir Peter Blaker that he [Blaker] had met with Oppenheim and had briefed him over Oyston. "Oppenheim is your man. He is taking it very seriously — he is also a publisher..." In explaining to Murrin why Oppenheim was the front man for the Tory MPs, Blaker went on to say: "I think they probably got together and said he is the man to do it!"

The tapes form part of a large collection amassed over some eight years by Murrin when he investigated Oyston at the request of Lancashire Tories and Westminster MPs.

Murrin, who has campaigned against local government corruption now and then, shoots from the hip. One misplaced shot was aimed at Brian Johnson, the Chief Constable of Lancashire, after Murrin became convinced there were leaks coming from within the Preston nick.

His public attack brought an angry response and a writ from the chief constable and a furious telephone call from Sir Peter Blaker. Blaker told Murrin that he had gone over the top and that he should not repeat the accusations. Blaker said he had spoken to the chief constable and that the matter would drop if Murrin shut up.

This Murrin agreed to do. (Blaker and Robert Atkins MP had been to see Johnson on more than one occasion about Oyston and other matters and had reported back to Murrin previously.)

As Murrin did shut up, he was surprised two weeks ago to receive a summons to attend the high court on 26 February to be assessed for damages in connection with a writ he thought had been dropped.

When the *Eye* contacted Lancashire police for a comment we were referred to the chief constable's lawyer. In a written response to some of our questions to the chief constable — we had asked how Sir Peter Blaker presumed to speak for the chief constable — we were told that the chief constable had no knowledge of representations made by Blaker. The answer omitted, however, to deny that the chief constable knew that Blaker was making representations on his behalf or that Blaker was authorised to do so.

As to meeting with Blaker and Atkins, the chief constable would say no more than that he had had the usual meeting with local MPs, which included wide-ranging discussions, and they were confidential. The lawyer's letter ended with the usual petty foggery about inaccuracy and with veiled threats of writs. Murrin will now try to get the judgment set aside.

THE THINGS THEY SAY...

"I was a non-executive director of the company so I did not have any detailed knowledge of Maxwell's business dealings. But I do not think it is fair to say that Maxwell was a crook"

— Lord Williams of Elvel, former financial adviser to Robert Maxwell, *Western Mail*, 12 December 1991.

Sally Deedes

THE WORLD'S favourite airline is practising an extraordinary form of racial discrimination.

Having inquired about the price of a British Airways ticket to Ghana for Christmas, reader William Dawes was quoted a price of £520 — a considerable improvement on the full £1,200, he thought.

Mr Dawes's initial pleasure at finding such a bargain disappeared when the agent suddenly said: "Oh, hang on. Are you of African origin? No. Well then I'm sorry I can't allow you to have a ticket at this price."

Another agent offered Mr Dawes a similar deal, but when he asked: "I don't have to be African origin?" the agent became shifty and said he would look into it. He came back to Mr Dawes and withdrew the offer of a £520 ticket.

Both agencies owned up to being what is known in the trade as "consolidators" — trusted agents of the airline who are appointed to sell tickets discretely below the price agreed at the beginning of each season with IATA.

A consolidator has the effect of taking up the slack in ticket sales and the operation may mean the difference between profit or loss on any particular route for the airline. (This is not the same as bucket shop operations, into which airline tickets are dumped at the last minute.)

The main point about a consolidator is that it will offer the normal price ticket at the same time as the discount ticket. Naturally the airlines aren't over keen to publicise such an operation because as they appreciate it would break the IATA agreements. The Civil Aviation Authority said: "Technically any price cutting is illegal, but since this will benefit the customer, no action is taken."

Here the only customer to benefit is the African. Whites, whom BA have assumed to be richer, are required to pay the full fare, which is more than double the consolidator price.

After many, many calls from the *Eye*, the British Airways press office finally responded. A spokesman denied any racial discrimination, saying: "It's no secret that British Airways works with travel agents which have a close knowledge of the ethnic community and are able to reach people who may not normally hear of flights and fares offered by British Airways". Patronising? Discriminatory? What do you think?

BUILDING societies may be right to criticise the Government's tardiness in helping hard-pressed mortgage payers who are about to lose their homes, but their own compassion can be questionable.

A Mr and Mrs Thornton who bought their house through the Nationwide Anglia Building Society were, some time later, sent abroad to work for the Save the Children Fund in Ethiopia. Rather than sell their property — they plan to come back and live in the house — they decided to let it.

The building society agreed but insisted that the interest rate on the Thornton's mortgage would be increased by 1 percent. The couple wanted to know why, since they were already paying an agent to oversee the letting of the house and the extra 1 percent made a considerable difference over a 12-month period.

No amount of argument over the following 18 months could change the society's mind: "After referring this matter to my senior colleagues," wrote a Mr Rogers from the Northampton headquarters, "there is no way we can overrule the society's policy."

Last week I rang the Nationwide Anglia and asked how they justified the additional sum. A spokesman said: "Basically we are here to provide houses for people to live in. We regard the mortgage as a commercial loan and since the owners are relying on the rent our mortgage is more at risk." But the owners are earning money so in the end they would pay the costs should anything go amiss. "We can be flexible in certain circumstances and we have just written to the Thorntons and we think they will be pleased." It is a shame they could not have been more flexible 18 months ago.

"I'm off to the sales — d'you know what you want for Christmas yet?"

Sporting Life

HACKS on the *Racing Post* are having difficulty preventing their natural feelings of sympathy towards their anxious fellow scribes on the *Mirror*-owned *Sporting Life* from being overwhelmed by a tide of giggling hysteria. This follows the revelation that Mirror Group employees' pension fund was partly administered by *Sporting Life* editor Mike Gallemore.

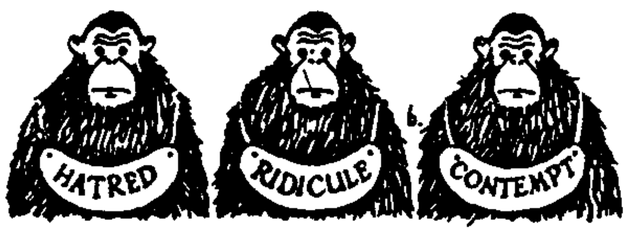
Funds of a lesser magnitude have gone down the drain as a result of the BBC's eleventh hour decision and against all expectations, to commission a second series of *Trainer*. Back in October when this wooden offering was still in the stalls, the wily Graham Sharpe, PR manager for William Hill, picked up on the fact that the programme's fate might be in the balance and offered odds about its survival into 1992. Even money *no* second series was available right up until November when the price hardened to three to one on and a number of Television Centre "insider dealers", confident that BBC1 controller Jonathan Powell was about to pull the plug, availed themselves of the bigger price.

Now their hopes of profit have been dashed; but why the volte-face? According to a senior BBC figure it's "become a matter of pride. We've got to show that we can get it right."

The Channel 4 racing team, meanwhile, is continuing to take flak over its instant post-race interview with jockey Steve Smith Eccles in November. This was the incident at Newcastle where the poor naive "Eck" was supposedly ambushed by Derek Thompson and lured into declaring that he had suspected that his mount Ballinrostig had broken down but that he'd continued whipping it severely to keep it going to win the race.

Much copy has been churned out about the despicable habit of pressmen sticking a microphone under jockeys' noses straight after a race instead of giving them five or 10 minutes' grace to make up a suitable story. The view of many who worked on the transmission is that Smith Eccles is an unsentimental old toughie and that what he said was what he meant; the subsequent revised version being just a concoction to appease the Jockey Club and the RSPCA.

'Major Bonkers'



LIBEL NEWS

IN THE WAKE of Esther Rantzen's absurdly high libel award, five BBC Scotland executives are dipping into corporation funds to pursue libel actions against the newspaper *Scotland on Sunday*.

A story in October alleged that a series called *The Insiders* — about eight Scottish towns — had been covertly sponsored by the local authorities involved. The Beeb raised £20,000 from the local authorities and in return provided each one with a special video for promotional purposes. Five writs from senior BBC Scotland executives were issued, including one from Pat Chalmers, the outgoing controller and a part-time pig farmer, although head of television Colin "Blondie" Cameron, who had emerged favourably from the *SoS* article, was not consulted about the action.

Libel damages in Scotland tend to be low, because the awards are made by judges rather than juries; but if this case comes to court the costs are likely to be astronomical since Chalmers is starting a new job as director of the BBC's satellite news service, Worldwide Television News, and will have to commute to court, at the Beeb's expense, from his new office in Hong Kong.

ZOO NEWS

A SIMMERING feud at London Zoo is likely to erupt next Monday at a "special general meeting" of its controlling body, the Zoological Society of London.

The meeting has been called at the insistence of some of the society's fellows, who complain that the zoo has been "brought to the brink of bankruptcy" by "gross mismanagement". The fellows — who style themselves "the Ad Hoc Reform Group" — are demanding the wholesale sacking of the society's officers, council and senior management.

This has not gone down too well with the Zoological Society's secretary, a retired vet called Sir Barry Cross. In a letter to all the society's members just before Christmas, he claimed that "great resentment" had been caused by the group's initiative. Nevertheless, he added grumpily, the group had somehow won the support of "more than the 50 fellows required under bye-law 50 to requisition a special general meeting", so he had no choice but to call one.

This was more than slightly disingenuous. When the Ad-Hoc Group tried, in November, to send an open letter to all fellows setting out their low opinion of the zoo's management, they were refused access to the address list. The director of administration, Peter Denton, explained that fellows were "not allowed" to communicate with one another. Still, through word of mouth and copies of *Who's Who* the rebels managed to locate 150 fellows — of whom more than 100, including 10 university professors, wrote back enthusiastically supporting the call for a special meeting.

The charge against Sir Barry and his colleagues is that they have dragged London Zoo into crisis at a time when other zoos have been flourishing. "One thing good zoos recognise is the contribution they can make to the breeding of endangered species," according to the Ad Hoc Group. "Chester, Paignton, Edinburgh, Howletts and Port Lympne have all increased attendances in recent years: they're very good at breeding endangered species and telling people about it." At the antediluvian London Zoo, by contrast, attendances have halved since the 1960s.

Apology
Mr Reg Akehurst

In the course of an article in *Eye* 772 we referred to Reg Akehurst, the horse trainer. We withdraw any suggestion in the article that Mr Akehurst advised Brian Hollis, the owner of a horse called Muhadib, to reject a large offer for the horse and then dishonestly procured its sale to an associate at a gross undervalue and profited from the horse's subsequent success in Bermuda. The true facts are that Mr Hollis himself decided to reject the offer for Muhadib and the horse was subsequently sold for its true value through a contact of Mr Akehurst in Barbados. There is no truth in any suggestion that Mr Akehurst acted improperly or dishonestly in relation to the sale of the horse and we are pleased to take this opportunity to apologise to him for any embarrassment caused by the article.

Letters

Forth right

Sir,

As one who has, in the past, been fortunate enough to be praised by PRIVATE EYE *for my reporting of the Lockerbie disaster, I must leap to the defence of Scotland's Lord Advocate and Scottish police who have spent three years investigating it.*

There can be no doubt that officers of the Scottish forces based in Lockerbie have carried out an investigation of the utmost integrity as they try to track down the perpetrators.

The Lord Advocate, as the man ultimately responsible for that investigation, can share some of the credit. I am convinced they have pursued their inquiries properly and effectively.

The cover up comes, I think, because ultimately the British and United States governments wanted to divert attention from Syrian and Iranian-backed Palestinian factions. To do this, the Scots investigators may well have been starved of the high calibre intelligence information that could have helped them. Do not be too quick to claim the innocence of the Tripoli Two.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID JOHNSTON,
Group Head of News, Radio Forth.

Solar complexus

Sir,

With reference to your article on the £150K grant to BP solar from the government. I can appreciate the tone of your article but I would like to point out some facts.

1. The money is to be given to a POOR university department, via BP (read your newspapers!).

2. Subsidy for UK research into solar from government is less than 1/2000th of Germany, USA, Japan.

3. Grants are driven by public awareness — hence the small UK grant!

4. Research is also done inside industry and IS under financial scrutiny.

5. Contributions from industrial research to USEFUL technologies are as great as any University department.

6. There is no recognition of industrial research scientists because of their technological/commercial achievements (secret you see!).

7. The industrial scientists' mind is owned by others with little reward — think about that, its free for you!

DAN JOHNSON,
(an insider)

West Byfleet, Surrey.

Coe respondent

Sir,

Well, well, well.

Your correspondent Jonathan Coe (EYE *782) in his narrow assumption of sole ownership of his name, lays himself wide open to charges of "critic's ego" etc.*

I hope this letter goes someway towards its deflation to more usual proportions.

Committedly yours
JONATHAN COE,

London SE24.

O.B.N.

Mrs Thatcher was a truly great Prime Minister. In her 12 years she irreversibly changed the face of Britain for the better. It now begins to look as if history may find that not her least contribution to this country was the way she hand-picked her successor.

SIR JOHN JUNOR
Mail on Sunday

Submitted by R. Sworder.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Not to mention

Sir,

Given the Prime Minister's predilection for presenting the achievements of himself and his Government as "not inconsiderable", I would recommend that he read George Orwell's 1946 essay POLITICS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. *Here Orwell points out the meaninglessness of this sort of nonsense and suggests that the afflicted can be cured by memorizing the phrase "a not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field". Oh yes.*

Yours not unfaithfully,
MALCOLM GASKILL,

Jesus College, Cambridge.

Cull of the wild

Sir,

I am baffled by your increasingly regular "Hunt News" column, which invariably sides with the criminal riff-raff who march under the banner of Hunt Saboteurs. Hunting is legal. The frequently violent activities of the saboteurs are not. These people are not interested in the welfare of foxes — their targets are the people who hunt. It is nothing more than anarchist class warfare.

Before printing any more "Hunt News", I suggest that you read the Scott Henderson Report, commissioned by a Labour government and published in 1951. The report exonerated all recognised forms of hunting in the UK of cruelty charges. The Scott Henderson committee accepted the need to control foxes, and supported the view that fox hunting with hounds caused the least suffering of any form of culling.

Yours faithfully,
J.S. THORNTON,

York.

Not good Franz

Sir,

Lunchtime O'Boulez's reference to the London Philharmonic's appalling conductor Franz Welser-Most puts me in mind of his despicable behaviour at one of last year's Promenade concerts (Eye 783).

At the end of the first movement of Bruckner's 7th Symphony, one of the most arduous works in the repertory, a rank-and-file member of the violins needed a little extra time to adjust his instrument. Any well-mannered conductor would have affected not to notice, but Worse-Than-Most glared pointedly at the offender, so drawing the eyes of the entire Albert Hall audience onto the wretched player.

But the orchestra had its revenge. The remaining three movements of Bruckner's magnificent work were among the most pedestrian and uninspired performances I have ever heard.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN V. HEYES,

Oxford.

Almost nothing is known of JOHN MAJOR, not even his dates, and even the catalogue of Gooch and Thatcher treats him as no more than a marginal figure.

Sleeve notes — Shakespearean Songs

Really Square

Sir,

It's so nice to see "Square Eyes" so up to date on all that's occurring in the 'hit parade'. After all, it's only about two years since the chart was compiled on Sundays rather than Tuesdays, as it used to be. It is perfectly understandable that you cannot be expected to keep up to date with such recent developments!

Yours poptastically,
MARK TAYLOR,

London N19.

Lookalike

Edmonds

Million-Dollar Man

Sir,

I wonder if readers have noticed the uncanny resemblance between that perennial pullover Noel Edmonds and Ted Dibiase, "The Million-Dollar Man" posable figure. Are they perchance related? I think the licence-payer should be told.

Yours faithfully,
MARIA WADHAM,

Epsom, Surrey.

Foxed

Sir,

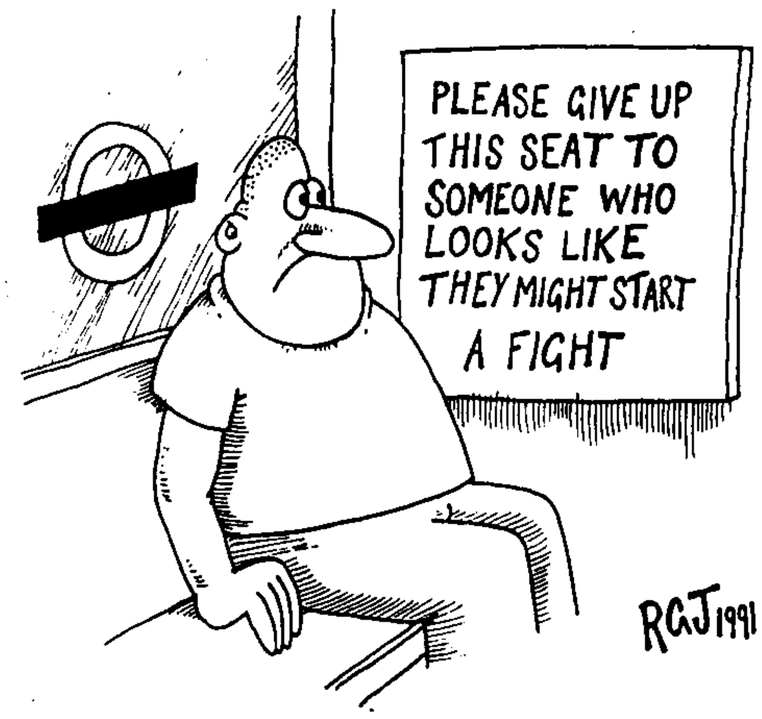
For a publication that considers itself generally impartial, Private Eye has taken a remarkably one-sided viewpoint on the issue of fox-hunting. I refer to the "Hunt News" column, which regularly decries the efforts of the constabulary in their attempts to deal with the hordes of urban Spartists who crawl out of their inner-city squats every weekend, and descend on the countryside with the sole purpose of creating mayhem.

Perhaps Private Eye feels that as few of its readers live in rural areas, their views on this subject can be ignored.

In the areas where fox-hunting is carried out, the vast majority of the population support the hunt and the police. Moreover, they consider these rather odious creatures to be pests, and would be quite happy to see them exterminated, however painfully. Incidentally, some of them also hunt foxes.

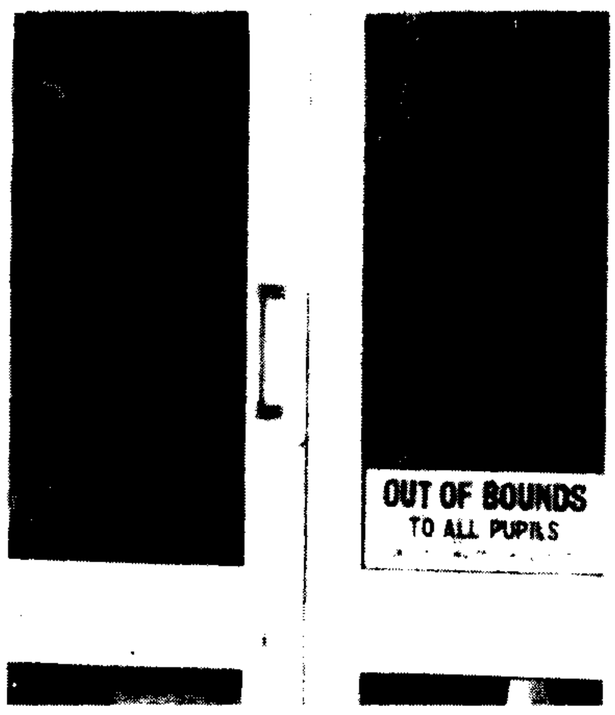
Yours faithfully,
JOHN SHEEHAN,

South Africa.



I-SPY

SCHOOL ENTRANCE



Submitted by J. Smith. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Barrator

Sir,

In your issue of 22 November you kindly printed a letter from me in which I rebuked the EYE *for its previous non-stop barrage of abuse directed at Robert Maxwell. Revelations since then, however, have led me to suspect that I may have been wrong. Sorry.*

Yours sheepishly,
FRANK VALENTINE,

Norfolk.

Sado Maxwellism

Sir

"We're administering the last writs; Here lies Bob Maxwell; He lied everywhere else; It's a huge loss; About two billion; He was a great man. 20 stone at least; Do you come here often?; Neither did he; You're all fired."

*Could your disgusted correspondent John Gold (*EYE *781) explain precisely which of the above sentences on your "vile cover" resemble the "sadistic and anti-semitic mania of the Nazi period," as published in* DER STURMER*? I, for one, think I should be told.*

Yours in bemusement,
ERIC BLOCH

Geneva.

Puff

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the similarity between the latest BR excuse ("Leaves on the track") and an incident in GORDON, THE BIG ENGINE by the Rev. W. Awdry? Is this the REAL source of BR's lame excuses? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
NEIL D'COSTA,

Stockport.

PS. If it IS, passengers, sorry CUSTOMERS, should be on the look-out for "Elephant in the tunnel", "Bulls on the line" and "Thomas Comes To Breakfast".

Poorf redaer

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the remarkable similarity between the work of the writer Tolkein, thrice referred to (no mishtake, shurely?) in your Literary Review (Eye 783), and that of the rather better-known writer Tolkien?

I wonder if by any chance they could be related? Perhaps your reviewer should be told.

Yours faithfully,
P.E. DANTIC-GITT,

Liverpool, 15.

PS: Bet you don't print this correctly.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We took the kettle off the boil and overheated the economy."
GEOFFREY DICKENS MP, ITV
(Mike Mitchell)

"... We do not need another sole proprietor who will bully and steal when we can do it ourselves."
PAUL FOOT, Radio 4
(Peter Fineman)

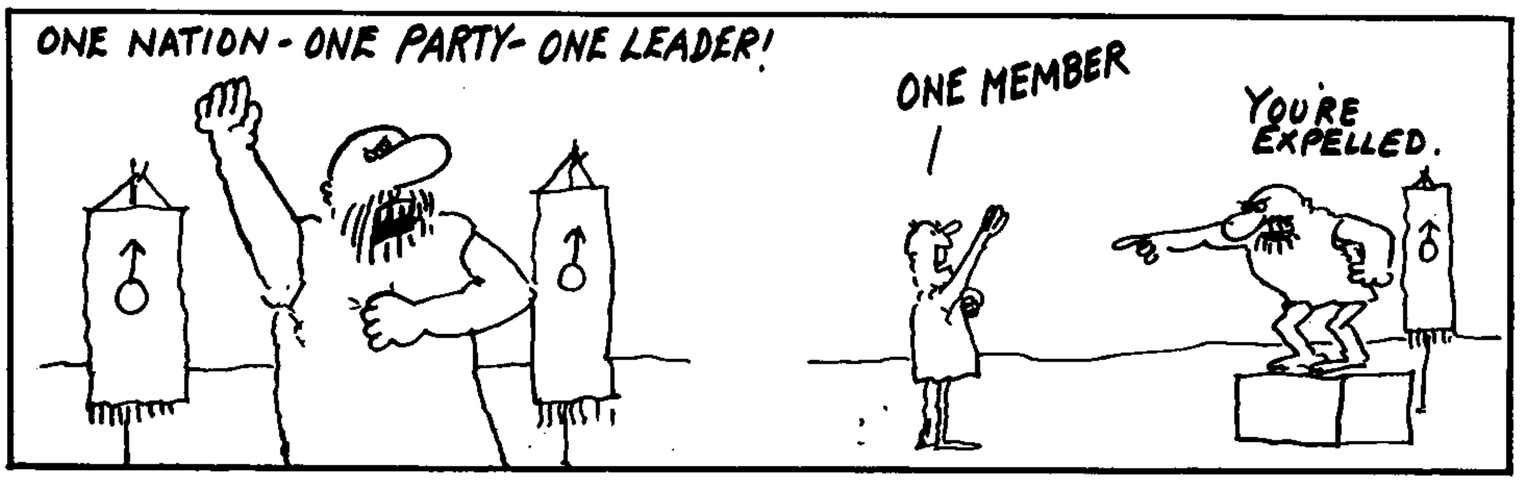
Jim Bowen: *"You're a fisherman aren't you?"*
Contestant: *"That's right, Jim"*
Jim Bowen: *"What do you fish for?"*
Contestant: *"Fish, Jim"*
BULLSEYE, ITV
(Ged Higgins)

"I was in a no-win situation, so I'm glad I won rather than lost."
FRANK BRUNO, ITV
(Timothy Ward)

"Without picking out anyone in particular I thought Mark Wright was tremendous."
GRAEME SOUNESS, BBC Radio
(Peter Agnew)

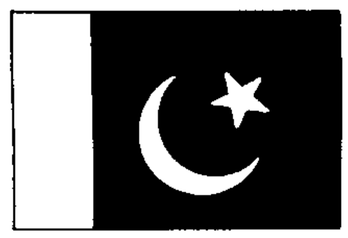
HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from Rapestan

from Our Own Correspondent



PAKISTAN means "land of the pure"; but seldom has a country's name been the subject of so many ribald jokes and so much public anger.

For weeks our newspapers have run detailed reports of the brutal gang-rape of a 40-year-old mother of two, Ferhana Hyat, in the heroin-capital Karachi in the troubled province of Sind.

The case has shamed and traumatised the country. Ferhana belongs to an old feudal family; her father, Shaukat Hyat, being a veteran political leader and close associate of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the man responsible for our misbegotten republic. Her first cousin is married to the commander of the Armoured Corps.

Hyat wrote to our head of state demanding retribution, but President Ishaque, a corrupt rogue well-known for his shifting allegiances, his links to BCCI and the US intelligence agencies, did not even reply. One reason for his reluctance was that his son-in-law, Irfanullah Marwat, head of the secret police in Sind and widely considered a sadist, was behind the crime.

Hyat then did something unheard of in a country like ours: he called a press conference, told journalists what had happened to his daughter and denounced the regime. This was followed by Ferhana talking to journalists and naming Marwat as the guilty party.

Her house had been raided at night; the watchman and servants tied up; and she was gang-raped for several hours by more than a dozen plain-clothes policemen. One of the rapists expressed his regret that her two children were not present to witness her humiliation.

The reaction in the country was deep shock. Men and women demonstrated in every city. Some with placards asking "Would you have been inactive if it had been your daughter?" paraded outside Ishaque's official residence in Islamabad.

The government realised something had to be done. An inquiry was promised and cabinet ministers began to offer Hyat their condolences. The old politician said he was not going to stop agitating until Marwat was arrested and charged. The prime minister, Nawaz Sharif (*sharif* means "decent") cut short a state visit to Senegal and returned to find the country engulfed in shame. Mr Decent condemned the incident but refused to dismiss Marwat pending an inquiry.

The province of Sind, under its boozy chief minister Jam Sadiq, and his police boss Marwat, is being run as fiefdom. Sadiq has made no secret of his desire to finish off the Bhuttos and in Marwat he has found a willing tool (*sic*). Several hundred People's Party activists were imprisoned and many have been tortured, in Marwat's presence, for refusing to implicate Benazir and her mother in non-existent crimes. The rape of Ferhana was part of this state terror: Ferhana is a close friend of the Bhuttos and her brother is a People's Party deputy in the Punjab legislature. Ferhana had also rudely rebuffed a come-on from Marwat.

Rape is so common here it has never been treated as a crime. The recent passage of a bill which made Islamic law in relation to women the law of the land has not helped: the mullahs agitating for it were recently exposed as clients of a well-known brothel, where they consumed a lot of exotic "sandwiches".

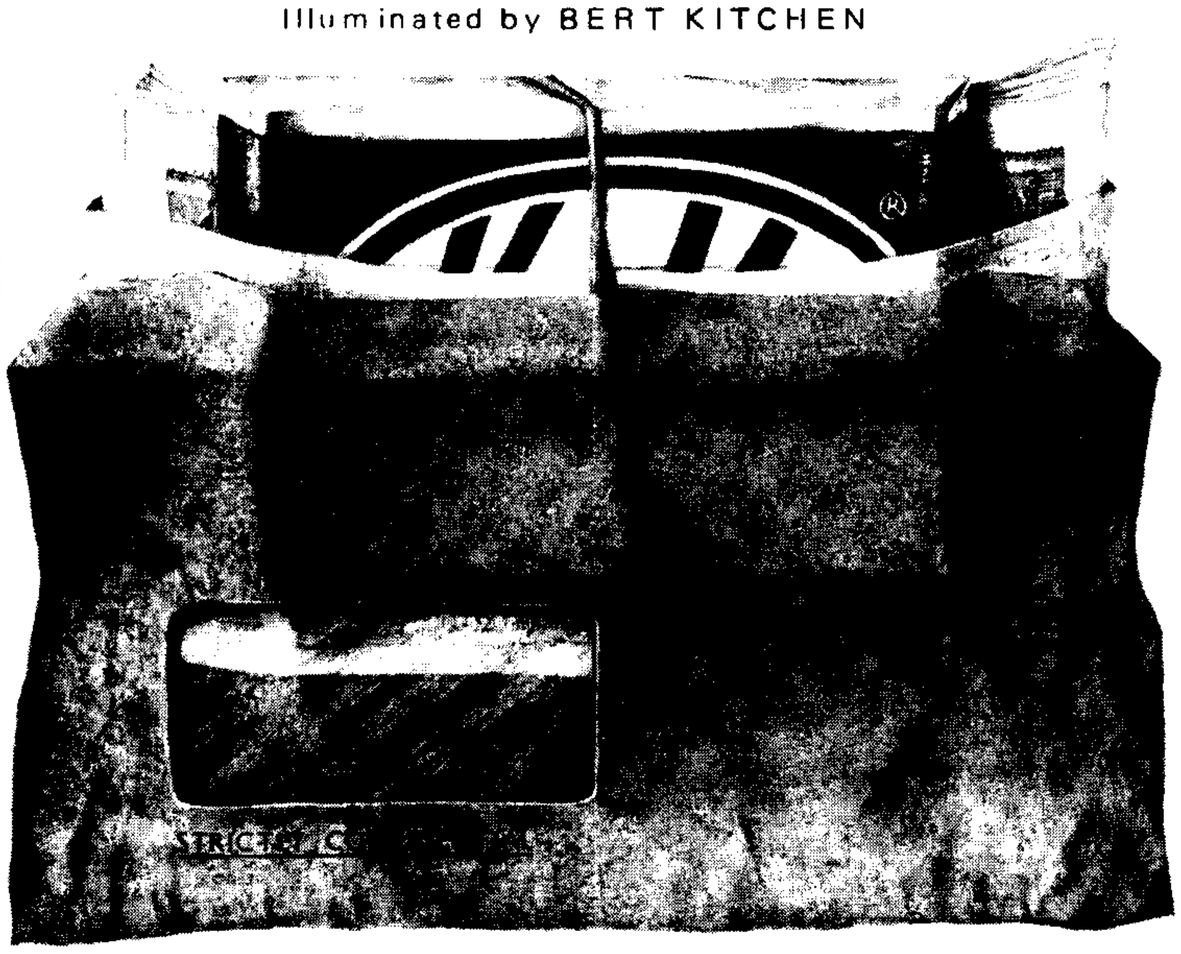
To nobody's surprise the official tribunal appointed by the president has, as expected, cleared Murwat of the charges. Hyat, who never had any confidence in the investigation, has now called on a special wing of assassins in his tribe to take the necessary action.

Meanwhile our country dies a slow death. Nawaz Decent and his finance minister were recently mixed up in the collapse of a Co-operative Bank where hundreds of thousands of people lost their savings; but Ishaque, who dismissed the Bhutto government for corruption, has not even reprimanded his protegés.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN



"WE ARE disgusted — yes — disgusted," said Mr Vincent Kay, a staff organiser at the Reynolds Chain factory in Stockport.

"Management asked the work force for a £1M Production Month. All 300 of us got stuck in, and as a 'recognition of effort' award we were each given a bar of Kit-Kat. To add insult to injury, the bars had penny-off wrappers."

Speaking for Reynolds Chain, Mr Anthony Ward said: "This is a sick world. I paid £40 for the Kit-Kats. There is no gratitude. The same sort of thing happened last year when they got an Eccles Cake each. Never again."

MR Na Dae-Pal, a South Korean businessman, has been invited by the mayor of Seoul to change the name of his new restaurant/beer cellar from 'The Hitler' to "something less controversial".

"I am not a student of history," said Mr Dae-Pal. "I spent a long time thinking of a name that would have an authentic European ring. Finally I decided on The Hitler and bought a number of swastika flags to hang on the walls. Korea guarantees liberty of expression to its people. And I wanted a title that would appeal to German tourists."

AFTER Mr Jesus de Romba, Chairman of the Caribbean Tourist Board, had made an impassioned appeal for a further government grant to protect and enhance the "cultural and architectural heritage of the Great Archipelago", it was revealed by Miss Angelica Sumarez that the Old Half Way Courthouse of Kingston, Jamaica, whose curators were given a $10,000 preservation grant in 1990, has in fact disappeared, and a Mainway Wine and Chili Bar has been built on the site.

DURING her interview, Mrs Dian Moore, President Bush's Director of Social Engagements, confirmed that he had withdrawn his promise to attend the funeral of Mr Frederick Stannard, "typical hard-working American citizen", after Mr Stannard's son revealed in a telephone conversation that his father was not yet dead but had given instructions that his life-support machine was to be turned off at a time when the President's schedule allowed him to visit Gainford cemetery.

IN HIS plea for mitigation, Mr Pazio Kuna told the Roman court: "My client, Carlo Mappesi, admits that he designed, printed, and used over 300 fake Italian postage stamps of the following denominations: one of L200, commemorating World Drunkards' Day, one of L350 celebrating the First Stolen Car Show, and a third of L500 in praise of Naples Polluted Water Week.

"However, he only committed these crimes to illustrate his skill as a graphic designer and engraver, and to declare himself to be a socially conscious artist."

Six months suspended.

THE RELATIVES of Mr B.S. Chiang, a Canadian car salesman shot dead during a card game, were outraged to find that it was not his body to whom they were paying their last respects but that of Mr T.V. Wong, his opponent in the game, whom he had, simultaneously, shot.

"Wong's corpse was not only in my father's casket," said Miss B.T. Wong, "it was dressed in his best suit."

INFORMATION: Manchester Evening News, 6.11.91; Journal de Geneve, 30.10.91; The Weekly Gleaner, 30.10.91; Baltimore Sun, 19.10.91; ABC 26.10.91; Reuters Report, 2.11.91.

MONITORS: Derek Walters; June K. White, James W. Bannister, Alasdair Mackenzie, "Rolleston", Eva Kaluzynska.

150 Years Ago

***PRIVATE EYE*, which last issue claimed to have been the first to expose Mr Robert Maxwell, would like to apologise to Mr Charles Dickens who we now acknowledge scooped the *Eye* in his novel *Little Dorrit* (1857). Writing about the great financier as "Mr Merdle", Dickens recounted the aftermath of his death, which was at first attributed to stress, then suicide.**

... appalling whispers [began] to circulate, east, west, north, and south. At first they were faint, and went no further than a doubt whether Mr Merdle's wealth would be found to be as vast as had been supposed; whether there might not be a temporary difficulty in "realising" it; whether there might not even be a temporary suspension (say a month or so), on the part of the wonderful Bank. As the whispers became louder, which they did from that time every minute, they became more threatening. He had sprung from nothing, by no natural growth or process that any one could account for; he had been, after all, a low, ignorant fellow; he had been a down-looking man, and no one had ever been able to catch his eye; he had been taken up by all sorts of people in quite an unaccountable manner; he had never had any money of his own, his ventures had been utterly reckless, and his expenditure had been most enormous. In steady progression, as the day declined, the talk rose in sound and purpose. He had left a letter at the Baths addressed to his physician, and his physician had got the letter, and the letter would be produced at the inquest on the morrow, and it would fall like a thunderbolt upon the multitude he had deluded. Numbers of men in every profession and trade would be blighted by his insolvency; old people who had been in easy circumstances all their lives would have no place of repentance for their trust in him but the workhouse; legions of women and children would have their whole future desolated by the hand of this mighty scoundrel. Every partaker of his magnificent feasts would be seen to have been a sharer in the plunder of innumerable homes; every servile worshipper of riches who had helped to set him on his pedestal, would have done better to worship the Devil point-blank. So, the talk, lashed louder and higher by confirmation on confirmation, and by edition after edition of the evening papers, swelled into such a roar when night came, as might have brought one to believe that a solitary watcher on the gallery above the Dome of St Paul's would have perceived the night air to be laden with a heavy muttering of the name of Merdle, coupled with every form of execration.

For by that time it was known that the late Mr Merdle's complaint had been simply Forgery and Robbery. He, the uncouth object of such wide-spread adulation, the sitter at great men's feasts, the roc's egg of great ladies' assemblies, the subduer of exclusiveness, the leveller of pride, the patron of patrons, the bargain-driver with a Minister for Lordships of the Circumlocution Office, the recipient of more acknowledgement within some ten or fifteen years, at most, than had been bestowed in England upon all peaceful public benefactors, and upon all the leaders of all the Arts and Sciences, with all their works to testify for them, during two centuries at least — he, the shining wonder, the new constellation to be followed by the wise men bringing gifts, until it stopped over a certain carrion at the bottom of a bath and disappeared — was simply the greatest Forger and the greatest Thief that ever cheated the gallows.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

This week I am facing a not inconsiderable dilemma. It is very hard to know what day it is when there are so many holidays. It feels like Sunday today, but my new diary says it is Monday. Also, half of this week is in my old 1991 Economist Diary and the other half is in my new Chelsea FC Supporters Club Diary which my friend David Mellor gave me for Christmas. It is very useful indeed, as it has a complete list of all the fixtures for the New Year. "Except the election," said David, with his usual brilliant wit.

My other Christmas presents were a set of my favourite biros

from Rymans from my wife Norman and another copy of his new book from Jeffrey Archer. He had signed it "To Roger. Happy Birthday. June '91". His jokes are almost as good as David's.

Tuesday

We set the alarm very early today so as not to miss an important radio programme. But it was wrongly tuned and Norman and I both had a nasty shock when we heard the voice of Brian Redhead on the Today programme, who in our judgement we are not in the smallest degree in favour of. He was asking Norma Lamont in his usual rude way *when* the recession was going to end. As if anyone knew that!

Anyway, we soon found the programme we wanted: Norman's Radio 2 selection of her favourite tunes. As we listened in bed, we drank a cup of the finest Typhoo tea from our new Teasmade, a present from a Mr Ranjit Patel who sent it round in a Rolls Royce with a charming card saying "Don't forget the New Year's Honours." As if I would! Norman and I make a special point of turning to the list first when they print it in the *Daily Mail*.

Norman's selection of music was, to an unbiased observer, extremely interesting and original. I recognised a great many of the classical works. There was the theme from the World Cup, the Lloyds Bank tune, the Hamlet Cigar music and the British Airways duet. Altogether it was a most agreeable pot-pourri, as the announcer said at the end. No one can accuse us of being Philistines, a charge which was levelled with no small measure of appropriateness at my predecessor and her husband.

(New Year Resolution: I am not going to mention Mrs Thatcher ever again.)

Wednesday

Mrs Thatcher is on television talking about Mr Gorbachev who has resigned on the grounds that he no longer has any useful role whatsoever. I have to admit that this is the one subject on which she is well qualified to talk!

It is also appropriate, I remarked to Jeffrey Archer at our drinks party at Chequers, that Mr Gorbachev should be going out with the old year and Mr Yeltsin should be coming in. "A change of leadership is absolutely essential," I said. Everyone agreed with me and Chris Patten raised his glass and gave me one of his funny looks.

Thursday

I hate to say this but Mr O'Donnell is failing in his job. There have been more stories in the papers this week suggesting that Norma Lamont and I have differences of opinion over the economy. What nonsense this is! We are both in total agreement. We have no idea what to do.

Norma has come up with the brilliant plan of abolishing stamp duty. I suppose this is because more and more people are using fax machines. Still, I cannot see how this will help home owners pay their mortgages.

Friday

I am very excited, as our Christmas holiday treat consists of an outing to Wembley. I put on my blue scarf and my rosette and go to a quick cabinet meeting to discuss the economy before I set off.

"Oh," said Mr Hurd, wearing his most snooty expression, "have we started the election campaign already?"

Sometimes he is very stupid, as

is often the way with people who have had too much education.

"No," I told him, "I am off to see Chelsea play Turandot, who are, I believe, an Italian team."

"Most amusing, Prime Minister," said Mr Hurd. "I hope the *score* is satisfactory." They all laughed, especially Mr Waldegrave who nearly choked. This just goes to show how well we all get on in the cabinet, unlike the days of my predecessor whom I never mention any more (see above!).

Ring out the Belles! (Geddit?!)

It's GLENDA SLAGG

J.R. HARTLEY — aren'tchasickofhim?! Turn on the telly and what do you see?! Some borin' ol' buffer a-phonin' and a-moanin' just cos no one's got his book!!? I'm not surprised, Grandpa!? Who'd wanta read a book about fly-fishin' anyway?!! The only flies this gal's interested in are Arnie Schwarze-negger's?! (Geddit?!?)

J.R. HARTLEY — don'tchajustlovehim?!? With his luvable olde-worldy smile and gracious sports jacket, I say this genteel gent from a bygone age is Top of the Pops?!? (Geddit?!?) He deserves all the success he's got?! Three cheers for the Yellow Pages that can bring tears to the eyes of an elderly fly-fisher in the eventide of his life!? *(That's enough J.R. Hartley. Ed.)*

DID YOU hear Prince Andrew's blue joke?!? No?!! Pin back your lugholes, Mrs Whitehouse, here it comes!?! (Glenda's warning — some readers may be offended by what follows.)

"How did Robert Maxwell snuff it?"

"He told an Irish tart to toss him off!"

How sickening of Prince Andrew to tell this joke publicly!?! What a shocking error of taste?!? How can anyone with a public platform sink so low as to rehash sick, racist, dirty jokes about a much-loved public figure?!???! No wonder people are sick of the Royals?!!

HATS OFF to Prince Andrew, the Bernard Manning of Buck House?!? His Maxwell joke had the country a-gigglin' and a-wigglin'?! Here it is in full?!? *(You've done that. Ed.)*

HERE they are — Glenda's Hogmanay Hunks?!?

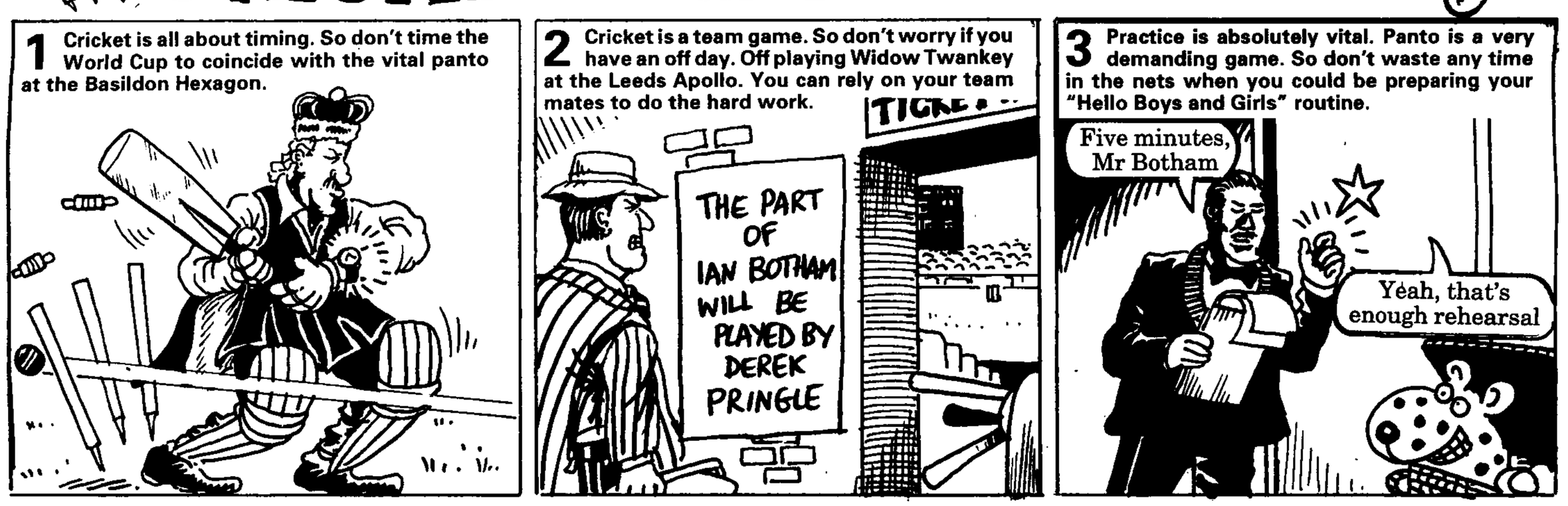
NICHOLAS COLERIDGE. Magazines' Mr Big?!? You don't look like a Harpers Queen to me, Nicki Baby!!?!

MALCOLM RIFKIND. You drive me off the rails?! What a sizzler?!? You'd better come late on my track, Mister?!?! *(You're fired. Ed.)*

J.R.R. TOLKIEN. Crazy name, crazy guy?!?!

Byeeeeeee!!!!

CRICKET THE BOTHAM WAY


1 Cricket is all about timing. So don't time the World Cup to coincide with the vital panto at the Basildon Hexagon.
2 Cricket is a team game. So don't worry if you have an off day. Off playing Widow Twankey at the Leeds Apollo. You can rely on your team mates to do the hard work.
THE PART OF IAN BOTHAM WILL BE PLAYED BY DEREK PRINGLE
3 Practice is absolutely vital. Panto is a very demanding game. So don't waste any time in the nets when you could be preparing your "Hello Boys and Girls" routine.
Five minutes, Mr Botham
Yeah, that's enough rehearsal
4 Keep your Eye on the Ball. The Ball scene is the toughest part of Cinderella, and if you don't pay 100 per cent attention you could be caught out by TV's Christopher Biggins as the Ugly Sister.
5 Pace yourself. Don't waste your most laughable performance on the cricket field. Save it for the first interval closer with Panto's Bob Carolgees and Spit the Dog.
HA HA
HA HA HA
WRONG
6 Don't argue with the umpire. Save it for the audience.
You're useless!
Oh no I'm not!
Oh yes you are!

SERIOUS FRAUD OFFICE RAIDS GNOME AWARDS CEREMONY

by Our Awards Staff **Bore Vidal**, TV's **Charles Boore**, **Janet Street-Borter** and the late **Mikhail Borbachev** *(with additional reporting by **Peter Jenkins** and **Polly Toynbore**, joint winners of The Wilcox-Rantzen Trophy For The Most Boring Husband-and-Wife Team 1972)*

GUESTS arriving at Headington Hall, Oxford last night for the annual Gnome Bore of the Year awards ceremony were shocked to see teams of bailiffs removing the chairs on which they hoped to sit, while officers of the Serious Fraud Squad headed by Inspector Borse (played by John Baw) of the Oxford CID were carrying thousands of files into waiting pantechnicons.

It later emerged that the special concrete Bore trophies, designed by Turner prize-winner Amish Kaboor in the shape of giant used condoms, had already been given as security by the Hall's late tenant to a bank in Panama in exchange for a £10 billion "revolving credit".

CALL NICK ROSS

As the host of the evening, **Mr Peter Sissons**, warmed up the audience by inviting "the gentleman at the back with the red tie" to give his views on the recognition of Croatia, guests were offered refreshment in the form of small glasses of contaminated Lucozade and HRT-flavoured "Old Mother Gorman's" punjab puris.

Then **Mr Emmanuel Strobes** stepped up onto the podium to announce that, after an all-night session, the twelve international judges has arrived at a "compromise agreement" on the Grand Bore of the Year award, after the British judge had been permitted an "opt-out" clause.

Opening the recycled buff envelope handed to him by the traditional master of ceremonies, Radio 4's Sir Nedwell Twinky, Mr Strobes read out a communiqué giving the name of the winner as "the **Maastricht European Unity Treaty**".

There was no applause at all, as guests squatted in silence on "seating" improvised from bundles of unsold copies of *The European*.

Mr Strobes then said that the judges had been given an unusually gruelling ordeal, due to the exceptionally low quality of this year's nominees. He mentioned HRH The Prince of Wales's designs for the new model village of Sturminster Gussett; the new British Telecom corporate logo device; and the celebrations for the bicentenary of the late Herr Mozart.

A cardboard replica of an ecu was accepted on behalf of the treaty by **Mr Lewd Rubbers**, the outspoken and larger-than-life Dutch premier.

As Mr Rubbers picked his way forward over the recumbent forms of the already comatose guests to accept the award, the Bruges Group Male Voice Choir (director: N. Tebbit) sang selections from Mr Paul McCartney's heartwarming *Liverpool Oratorio*, featuring Dame Kiri te Karaoke as soprano soloist.

KEN BARLOW

One or two guests were then woken from their slumbers by the noise of a helicopter, from which Ms Anneka Rice, dressed in a turquoise David Icke-style "New Age" jump-suit descended by rope ladder, clutching the envelope containing the name of the winner of this year's Margaret Thatcher "Female Bore of the Year" award.

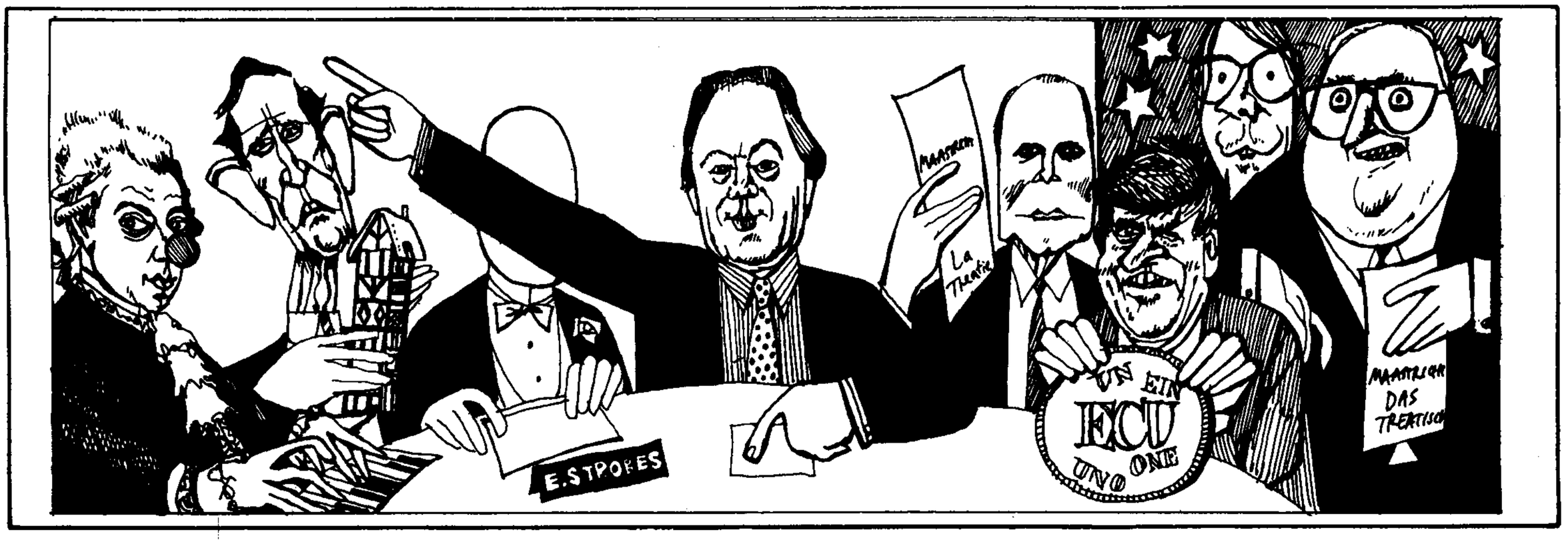
As the clock ticked away, Ms Rice breathlessly ran through the short list, which included **Ms Germaine Greer**, author of *Aren't Menopause Awful?*, **Ms Lynne Barbie**, the *Independent*'s award-winning interviewer, and **Ms Virginia Bottomley**, the safe-sex campaigner and wife of the former junior transport minister.

As the bailiffs began taking up the parquet flooring, which had been offered as "collateral" to the Bank of Grand Cayman for a £2 billion bond issue, Ms Rice donned a wetsuit to read out the name of the 1991 winner, the popular singing person **Madonna**.

Guests screamed with boredom as the musical legend, dressed only in a stainless-steel G-string, cavorted around the stage flagellating herself with rolled-up copies of the *Daily Telegraph*. She then, as a special request from the guests, declined to sing her latest hit, the name of which escaped her.

DARLING BUDS OF MAY

The guests were then encouraged to escape from the



hall by the staff of HM Prison, Brixton, as LBC's latest radio sensation **Mr Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill** delivered a humorous monologue entitled *My 3000 Most Hilarious Essex Girl Jokes*, beginning with "Why is the *Sunday Times* like an Essex girl? Because it's the last thing you want to see when you wake up in the morning."

As Mr Neill's second joke was drowned in a chorus of boos, he was dragged from the stage my members of the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad, who had been specially let out of prison for the day.

Order was then restored by the soothing effect of a two-hour video of **Mr Trevor Macdonald**, standing on the tarmac at RAF Lyneham, Wilts, waiting for the arrival of **Mr John McCarthy**.

GOLD BLEND ADVERTISEMENT

As snores echoed round the now almost empty room, the immensely talented cast of the hit musical *The Hunting of the Snark* came on to sing the names of the short-listed candidates for the Team Bore of the Year award.

"The first lot of people
with whom we're fed up
Are the England squad, for
the Rugby World Cup.
The next lot of people who
made us all wail
Are the appalling manage-
ment of British Rail.
Another bunch who made us
yawn with ennui
Were all the companies bid-
ding for a franchise on ITV.
But when it came to this
year's Grand Team Bore,
It had to be the BBC squad
who covered the Gulf War.
The men in the studio who
were so dull it hurts:
Dimbleby, Paxman and their
team of military experts."

At this point the song closed down owing to poor reviews and lack of bookings and, as **Mr Jeremy Paxman** stepped forward to receive the coveted "Royal Family" team award, guests were treated to 176 consecutive re-showings of the footage of the smart bomb blowing up the Baghdad air ministry.

CORN CIRCLES

Then the lights dimmed as the lovable **Mr Frank Bruno** climbed into a hastily improvised "ring", and in a 30-second "exhibition bout" succeeded in knocking himself out, while **Mr Harold Carpenter** explained how this proved that Frank was more than ready to take on the late Muhammed Ali in a bid for the world title.

Amidst cries of "fix", an official from the local electricity board arrived to turn off the power on the grounds of non-payment of the "red final reminder". Mr Strobes pleaded for a seven-day stay of execution in order to complete the ceremony, which had been sponsored this year by BCCI.

As darkness fell, he lit a candle and with some difficulty managed to decipher the names of the winners of the remaining categories.

"First, The Most Tedious Wedding of the Year," he read out. "As some of our more longer-serving guests may have spotted, this is a new category sponsored by Britain's leading crap jewellers, Ratners."

The award, to be known as "The Ken and Emmy", attracted a strong field, namely Sir Peregrine Wortshorne and The Lady Lucinda Lampshade, Mr Andrew Lloyd Webber and the one after Sarah Brightman, and the offspring of Mr Frederick Trueperson and Miss Raquel Squelch. "However," said Strobes, "I am sure you will agree that this year's most boring wedding was that of **Miss Elizabeth Taylor** and **Mr Michael Jackson**."

Mr Jackson's pet chimpanzee, Gummer, then collected the Ratner Trophy, a gold-style-plated M&S prawn sandwich.

GAZZA'S KNEE

As the audience were then invited to the windows to watch an exhibition of "joyriding" staged in the guests' own cars by members of Oxford's talented "ram-raiding community", Archbishop Carey gave an impromptu sermon blaming Mrs Thatcher and Salman Rushdie for the decline in moral standards which had caused these young people to lose hope.

By the light of the burning cars, Mr Strobes hastily read out the final winner of the evening, in yet another new category — The Most Boring Englishman Living In France Writing Dreary Books About An Englishman Living In France. Scarcely had he uttered the name of **Mr Peter Mayle**, than flames began to lick the walls of the building.

PADDY ASHDOWN

Suddenly doors flew open to admit an armed team of repossession officers from the Abbey National, Halifax, Leeds and Woolwich building societies, who were all claiming that the late occupier of the Hall had taken out a 100 per cent mortgage with them. When it was explained to them that the house was in fact the legal property of the local council, the building society chiefs began fighting amongst themselves. While Mr "Red Ken" Adair and his gifted staff bravely battled to put out the flames, the ceiling collapsed, showering the few remaining guests with the following items, *viz*: hundreds of unregistered rottweilers and pit-bull terriers; thousands of unwanted WE ♥ GORBIE t-shirts; tubs of I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT BUTTER butter-style spread; two tons of "leaves" specially swept onto the tracks by British Rail to account for late trains; two million unwanted Kurdish refugees (by courtesy of George Bush and Mrs Lynda Chalker); several million compilation videos of America's *Steamiest Sex Trials and Senate Hearings of 1991*; and several billion unwanted nuclear weapons, formerly the property of the late Soviet Union, a number of which exploded, bringing a premature end to the evening, and indeed the world.

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam John Arlott, Cricket Commentator

So. Farewell
Then.

John Arlott.

The Voice
Of Summer,

As you were
Dubbed.

"And after
Trevor Bailey
It will be
Christopher
Martin-Jenkins."

That was
Your
Catchphrase.

But who can
There be
After you?

E.J. Thribb (17½ not out)

MILITANT homosexuals today disrupted the highest ruling body of the Church of England as senior bishops warned that active homosexual clergy could be defrocked.

Standard

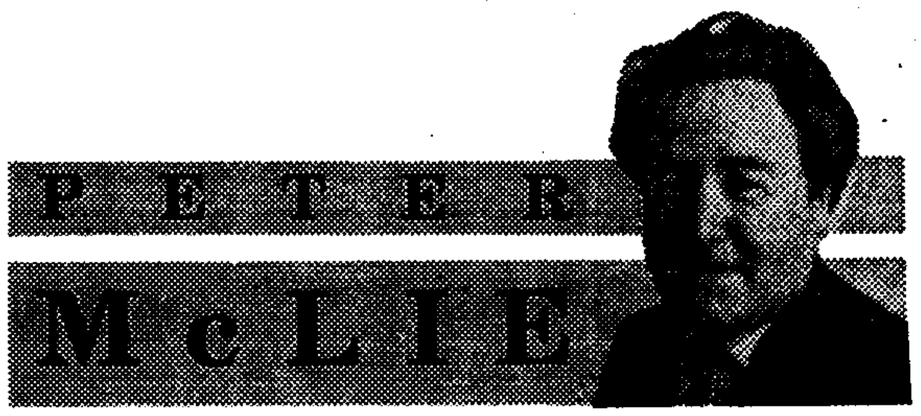
Great Bores Of Today.

"...I came down with it on Christmas Eve just when the wife was doing the turkey we had some neighbours in and I tried to keep going but I just had to go to bed it started with this blinding headache and then the sore throat *(coughs)* I haven't shaken it off even now *(wheezes)* I thought I was all right Boxing Day so I got up and took the dogs for a walk got as far as the corner had to go home and go to bed came out in a muck sweat so I drank what was left of the Night Nurse normally I take Day Nurse but by that stage the kids had got it and there was no chemist open round our way *(coughs)* the doctor said it's a virus that's going around you feel weak as a kitten and it's not as if I don't look after myself Sunday was the first day I was up all day all I could do was sit in a chair I don't know how Marjorie coped she cooked Christmas Day dinner for 13 including me although I didn't eat much and she had a temperature of 109° the whole time..."

Celeb

LIGGER

EVERY CHRISTMAS I CAN'T HELP BUT BE REMINDED OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD OF OURS LESS FORTUNATE THAN ME.
AS A WORLD FAMOUS ENTERTAINER I'M LUCKY I KNOW. BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO'D DO ANYTHING FOR A JOB AND A BIT OF CASH RIGHT NOW.
EVERY YEAR I SEE THEM ON THE STREET AND I THINK - THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO I.
PUSS IN BOOTS STARRING
IT MUST BE AWFUL BEING REDUCED TO APPEARING IN PANTO.
DOESN'T BEAR THINKING ABOUT DOES IT?



The World's Worst Columnist

I NOTICE a change in the way that people are recording the date. Only a week ago the final number was "1". Now all of a sudden it is "2". Funny don't you think?

☐ *WATSON seems to be a common name nowadays. For a start there is my colleague A.N. Watson and the former Prime Minister Harold Watson. I am told there is even a magazine called What's On. Isn't this a funny name for a magazine? Perhaps a case to be investigated by Sherlock Holmes and Dr Wilson.*

☐ **WASN'T there a load of rubbish on TV over Christmas? Hour after hour of second rate films, boring game shows and Terry Watson interviewing the Dalai Lama. After two solid weeks of watching this trivial garbage, I wonder why anyone bothers.**

☐ *J.P. HARTLEY does not exist, I have discovered. Yet his book is a best-seller. What a con.*

(You're fired. Ed)

Lives of the Saints

Part 94

Mother Esther and the Stoat

ONE of the greatest miracles recorded in the life of Mother Esther of Lime Grove was when she turned a libel into money.

For many years Mother Esther had worked selflessly among the poor children of Britain, setting up telephone lines and appearing on television with her little group of disciples.

But one day, when she was performing her saintly task of offering phallic-shaped carrots to old ladies in the streets, an evil stoat called Richard emerged from the gutter and proceeded to defame her, speaking many falsehoods against her.

Like all saintly people, Mother Esther was used to turning the other cheek when she was ridiculed by the ungodly. But on this occasion she decided that the Stoat's insults were threatening the very foundations of her mission on earth.

So she went on her knees and prayed that some miracle might come about. And, lo, after three weeks in court, her tiny libel was suddenly transformed into a mighty fountain of money.

And all the people were amazed, for when they counted the money they discovered that it amounted to no less than 250,000 golden groats.

And Mother Esther leaped for joy before the cameras, accompanied by her disciples, singing *Te Deum*s and hymns of joy for this sign of grace.

And Esther said: "I shall give all this money to the poor children, except for quite a lot which I shall keep to go on holiday in order to make up for all the suffering I have brought on myself."

NEXT WEEK: St Ivel and the Yoghurt.

'I WAS MAD' says David Oik

by Our Religious Staff
Sir Clifford Richard

THE former leader of the minority political party, the Social Democrats, Mr David Oik last night admitted frankly that he had "been mad" when he claimed to be the saviour of Britain.

"It was all the fault of the media," said the colourful Doctor Oik who had shocked the nation with his bizarre claims about proportional representation and breaking the mould.

"I was under a great deal of stress and I suppose I just flipped."

"I now realise that I was not the Messiah at all. It was a silly thing to say. My real name as everybody knows is Dr Napoleon Bonaparte and I come from the planet Venus with greetings from the great Zog of Moab."

Dr David Owen is 46.

"Did your husband put you up to this?"

SYLVIE KRIN'S

TRADITIONAL ROYAL

PANTOMIME

CIN·DI·RELLA

SCENE I

(Curtain Up. The scene is the kitchen at Althorp Castle. Diana is seated in rags with her cat)

DIANA: I am so unhappy and feeling blue
I'm so miserable I don't know what to do.
My wicked stepmother, Lady Raine,
Has sold off half our house again.
Now she's doing "Spencer Karaoke" at £5 a head,
And I've been banished to the kitchen instead.

(Enter Wizard in puff of smoke)

MERLIN VAN DER POST *(for it is he):*
Be of good cheer, my sad young friend.
Now I'm here, your woes will end.
Read what it says in this magic book.
I wrote it, it's brilliant — take a look.

DIANA *(sings from van der Post songbook)*:
When skies are grey and life gets you down,
Try and find a husband, preferably with a crown.

MERLIN: How very true that is...

CAT: How very very true.

SCENE II

(Outside Windsor Castle. Charles and his old mother, the Queen)

CHARLES: Look, Mater, at what I've done.
This organic beanstalk is much taller than an ordinary one.
No chemicals have here been applied.
And lo! E'en now it grows both high and wide.

QUEEN: Dunderhead youth! What good is that to me?
Your father will have a fit when he comes home for his tea.
Get these silly ideas out of your head,
And find yourself a proper job instead.

CHARLES: Mater, I agree with everything you've said.
But I can only get a job if you drop down dead.

(Snarling corgi chases Charles up beanstalk)

QUEEN: Come back here, my loony son.
There's still the milking to be done.

(Charles vanishes up beanstalk into the clouds)

SCENE III

(Charles emerges on beanstalk into Spencerland. He is in an agreeable park outside Althorp Castle. Chorus of antique dealers, auctioneers, second-hand carpet salesmen, etc, are carrying goods away merrily)

CHORUS *(sings):* We've got them on the cheap!
We've got them on the cheap!
Spencer's lost his marbles,
And his wife's an awful creep!

CHARLES: What on earth can be going on here?
Something appalling, it doth appear

(Sings)

It really is appalling,
Standards are really falling.
Architecture and education
Are really failing the nation.

AUDIENCE: Behind you!

CHARLES: Yes, I know you are. You always have been.
I'm very grateful.

AUDIENCE: No, behind you!

(They are shouting because the Good Fairy has appeared, dressed entirely in pink, carrying a pekinese in one hand and a giant jar of Magic Royal Jelly in the other)

FAIRY CARTLAND *(for it is she):*
Good morrow, young man — a prince by your mien,
I can introduce you to your future Queen.
Take this jar of Magic Jelly.
And before you know it you'll be married on the telly.

(She disappears in a cloud of perfume. Charles swallows Jelly)

CHARLES: What can be happening? I'm turning invisible.
In other circumstances it might be quite risible.

SCENE IV

(The Baronial Hall at Althorp. Charles enters invisibly. Cindirella is singing sadly)

CINDIRELLA: Raine, Raine, go to Spain.
Please don't bother me again.
My poor Daddy is bereft.
Thanks to you there's nothing left.

CHARLES *(invisible):* What a lovely creature, I can't help feeling.
Do you know, she really is appealing.

(Enter Wicked Stepmother, clutching sack of money, followed by doddering Earl in a trance)

RAINE: Look at this — a pot of gold
For all the treasures I've just sold.
You're next, Cinders, you wretched slave.
I'm marrying you off to some rich knave.

DIANA: Deliver me, Daddy, from this wicked witch.
Even her friends say she's an A1 bitch.

SPENCER: There's nothing I can do to help you, daughter.
Even though I know I oughta.
For I am under a magic spell,
Which makes me powerless to save my gel.

RAINE: Stop your blether, forget that girl,
Or I'll truly make you a Belted Earl!

(Waves magic wand at him in menacing fashion)

CHARLES: Now I must say the magic word,
So I can be seen as well as heard.
But what is the word? Please help me out.
Come on, audience, give us a shout!

AUDIENCE: Abracapalling!

CHARLES: I can't hear you.

AUDIENCE: Abracapalling!

CHARLES: That's not the magic word.

AUDIENCE: Oh yes it is!

CHARLES: Oh no it isn't! *(That's enough audience — Prince Ed, Director of Panto for The Really Useless Panto Company)*

(In flash of light Charles becomes visible, dressed in shining armour with crown on head, and stands between the Wicked Stepmother and Cindirella)

RAINE: Stand back at once, you insolent dog!
Or I'll turn you into William Rees-Mogg
(Shurely 'frog'? — Prince Ed)

CHARLES: You can't bully me, you painted crone.
I am Charles, who will shortly be on the throne.

VOICE OF QUEEN: Oh no you won't!

CHARLES *(to Raine):*
Enough is enough — let Cindirella free.
For it is written in the stars that she will marry me.
Raine — I call upon you to repent
Or to the deepest dungeon you will be sent.
You've offended against the laws of conservation
And betrayed the heritage of this proud nation.

(To Spencer)

You, Spencer, snap out of your trance.

SPENCER *(waking):* I say! What ho! It seems I've been led a merry dance!

CHARLES *(to Diana):* Lovely Diana, will you be mine?

DIANA *(to Charles):* Yes, Prince Charming, I am thine.

SPENCER: How about a glass of wine?

RAINE *(under breath):* Belt up, you drunken swine!

CHARLES: Then let us all swear by the holistic thingie,
And let all the bells begin to ringie.

(Enter Pantomime Dame Cartland, Merlin van der Post, the Queen, Prince Philip in the uniform of the Collector-in-Chief of the London Transport Ticket Unit, the Corgi, the Cat and the Chorus)

ALL SING: Hooray! Hooray! Three cheers for Chazza!
He's even more popular than the mighty Gazza!

AUDIENCE: Oh no he's not!

(Curtain)

Story by SILVIE KRIN Script by WILLIAM MACGONAGAL
As performed at Windsor Castle, 1991

Madam — I am writing in response to the article on last week's front page of the *Standard* about proposals for a professional creche facility to be launched in the old hospital records office and cottages.

As a parent of teenagers I am very aware and concerned about the needs of gangsters in the town at present. From the mid to late teens there is nowhere for them to go in the evenings as a drop-in facility other than pubs.

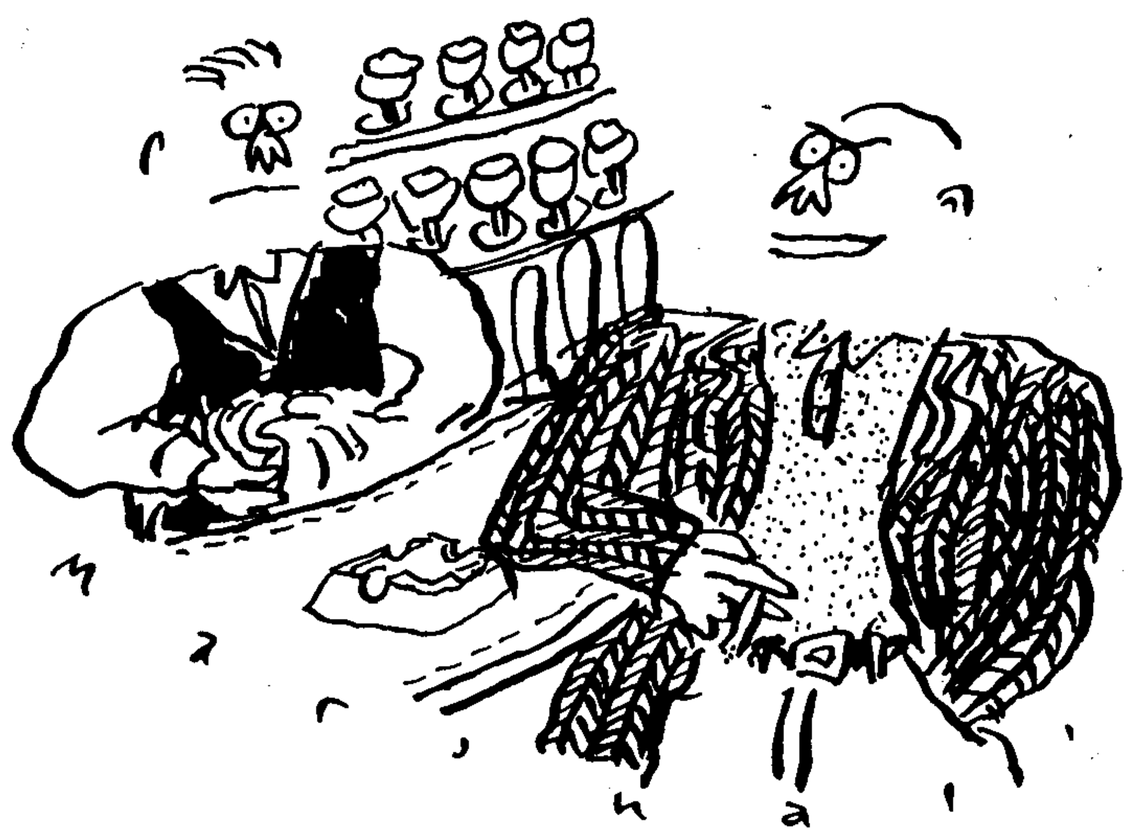
Wilts & Glos. Standard

Racist refusal

GLASGOW — An exclusive lawn tennis club yesterday admitted refusing a woman membership because she was Jewish. In an out-of-court settlement, Whitecraigs Lawn Tennis and Sports Club admitted racially discriminating against Ms Leonie Goodman (39).

She and her two children have now beeen offered free club membership. In addition, the club will pay her legal fees and £1,000 to a charity of her choice. It has also promised to repeat unlawful acts of racial discrimination. — (PA).

Irish Times



"Could I have a bottle of Newcastle Brown with a sausage in the top?"

Answers to 1991 Christmas Quiz

1. (i) Slavonia; (ii) Slovenia; (iii) Slovakia.

2. (i) Desert Storm; (ii) Desert Orchid; (iii) Haagen-Dazs.

3. Melvyn Bragg, Lynne Barber, Saturday night.

4. (i) The Channel Tunnel; (ii) Matador; (iii) The Hard Ecu; (iv) *Esquire* magazine; (v) The *Sunday Correspondent*; (vi) Eddie the Eagle.

5. (i) Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd; (ii) passive smoking; (iii) General Sir Peter de la Billiere, the others are Welsh; (iv) He was the Queen's gynaecologist between 1953 and 1958; (v) Princess Diana, but not since 1982.

6. The man could not have fallen off the yacht at 4.37, as claimed, unless he was already dead when he hit the water. The answer is therefore £526 million.

7. (i) Ian Woosnam; (ii) Bertie Wooster; (iii) The Liberal Democrats.

8. (i) The Birmingham Six; (ii) The Guildford Four; (iii) The Tottenham Three; (iv) The Famous Five; (v) The Secret Seven.

9. (i) Nadine Gordimer; (ii) Ben Okri; (iii) Monica Seles; (iv) a volcano in the Philippines.

10. (i) Lord Olivier; (ii) Sir Allan Green; (iii) A dolphin.

The man in the picture is Chief Mangosutho Buthelezi.

NORTHWOOD PREPARATORY SCHOOL (MOOR PARK)
require as soon as possible a
LUNCHTIME PLAY SUPERVISOR
for our 408 year old boys
Please tel. Mrs Hampel on Northwood (09274) 25648

Sad end to a literary era

by Sir Bernard Levin

WHAT have the following in common: Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, Stephen Fry, John Mortimer, Norman Tebbit, Michael Holroyd, Professor Norman Stone, the Count Tolstoy and Tariq Ali?

The answer is that they were all present last Tuesday at the party to mark the death of the magazine *Spartism Today*, perhaps the most influential magazine of its time, even though nobody read it.

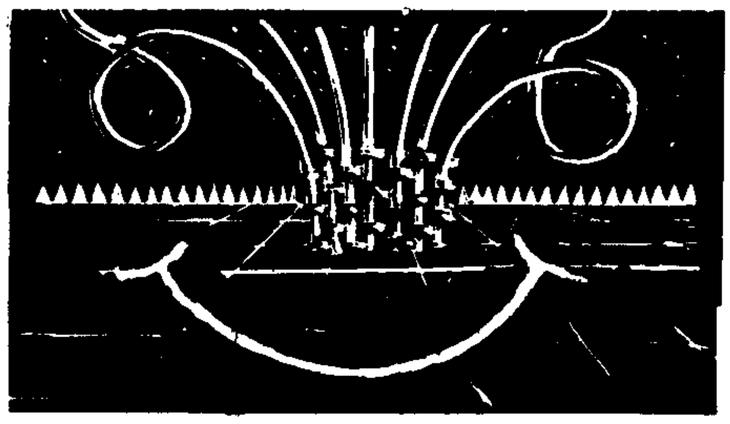
Perhaps best known for coining the word "Thatcherism" *(Cont. p.94)*

Another sad end to a literary era

This week's issue of *Punchism Today* is to be the last, bringing an end to over 250 million years of British humour.

Perhaps best known for the coining the word "That'snotveryfunny" *(That's enough sad ends, Ed.)*

DIARY



NIGEL DEMPSTER

It's been another outstanding year of exclusive revelations for the *Mail* Diary — the page that makes compulsory reading for my old friend international playboy and Argentinian jet-setter Luis 'The Bounder' Basualdo, 47, glamorous Princess Michael of Kent, 36, and former secretary to former husband of former escort to a former doyenne of the Ipswich business scene Helen Wilkes, 29, and many others — and I can now reveal that I have exclusively out-scooped my so-called "rivals" time and time again throughout this outstanding year of exclusive revelations.

In January, I burst into the New Year with an exclusive revelation about Lord Lucan, 57, the moustachioed Old Etonian playboy Earl and former member of the Claremont Club, who went missing in 1974 after murdering his former nanny, Sandra Rivett, 32, at the home of his former wife, Jane, 42. Sources close to the errant Earl exclusively reveal to me that he is still missing. "No one has seen him for a very long time," declares a close friend and former aide, who adds: "It's a very long time since he has been seen by anyone." It is now many years since the Earl was last spotted, I reveal.

I hear from my old friend first cousin to the Queen Royal Photographer former man about town restaurateur Patrick Lichfield, 51, that he is planning to stay at home and maybe watch a little television tonight rather than fly in Concorde to Manhattan to have dinner — at an exclusive restaurant once frequented by Ivana Trump, 43, former wife of former husband Donald Trump, 49. "I never fly by Concorde — and to be honest I haven't heard of the restaurant," reveals Patrick, 53, who is a first cousin to the Queen, "so there wouldn't be much point even if I could afford it."

In March, my story of the forthcoming marriage of a former Bristol nightclub owner to the former personal assistant to a former close friend of a former Royal equerry is belatedly picked up by all my so-called "rivals" in the downmarket press — even though the story is of no interest to anyone. In the same month — March — I reveal that close friends of Princess Michael of Kent are urging her to devote less of her time to looking after others — and more to herself. "She is terribly kind — much too kind — and never ever thinks of herself. Her life is spent in one charity work after another," Princess Michael dictates to me over the phone that morning. "And she gives what little money she earns to those less fortunate than herself. Be a poppet and give it the lead, Nigel, darling."

I am often asked how I come by so many outstanding revelations. I am giving away no secrets when I reveal that I am of the same class, background and education as the people I feature on my page — and this makes it easy for me to speak to them on a one-to-one basis. It will be a long time before my so-called "rivals" realise that only when one is born into the privileged world of minor public-school Australian-born social-climbing PR executives can one begin to understand them and write about them day after day.

In July, I reveal that Anthony Andrews, 44, has been spotted eating with his wife in a fashionable Battersea restaurant — only to be personally contacted by *Brideshead* actor Anthony Andrews and asked to make it clear that the Anthony Andrews who had been spotted eating with his wife in a fashionable Battersea restaurant was not the *Brideshead* actor Anthony Andrews — but former Kent property developer Anthony Andrews, 67, and his wife June, 58 — whose daughter Lucinda, 24, recently gave birth to a baby boy, Thomas — her second. Husband Maidstone-based former air traffic controller Keith, 35, is reported to be "delighted" — but as yet the couple have "no plans" to take the new baby to Castle Howard — home of the Howard family — to see where Yorkshire TV's *Brideshead Revisited* was originally filmed.

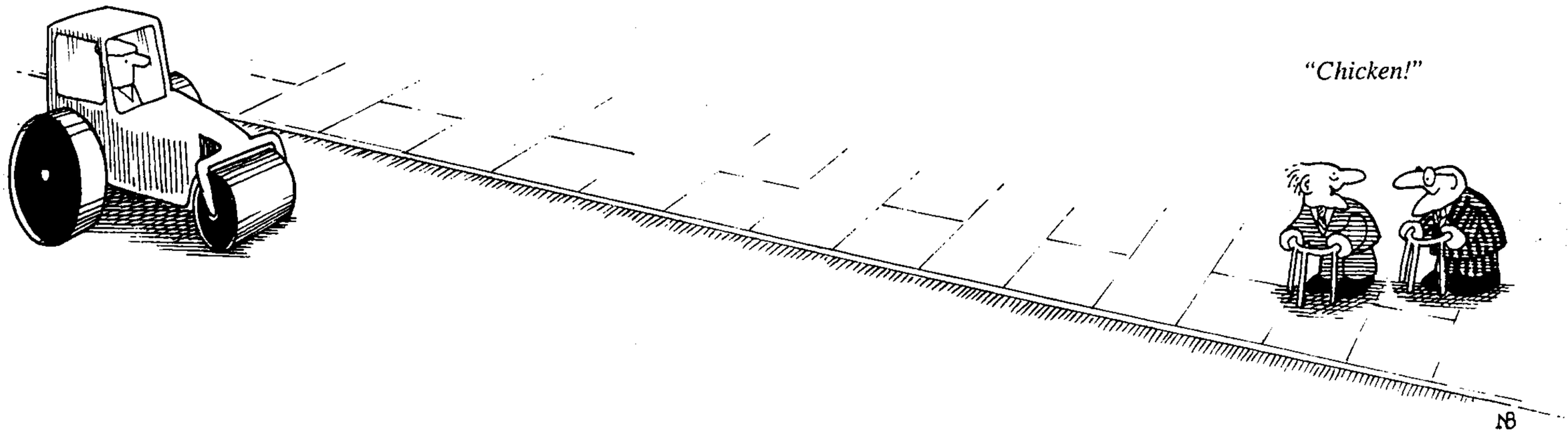
I can exclusively reveal that just sixteen months after attractive, lissome, tireless charity worker and avid art connoisseur Lady "Bubbles" Rothermere, 36, wife of *Daily Mail* proprietor Lord Rothermere, 42, suffered some slight toothache, all is well again. "I can now devote my energies exclusively to my charity work — thanks to my excellent dentist, New Zealand-born [illegible] Wainwright, 46 — whose sister former [illegible]orraine, 36, recently managed to book an upper circle seat for Andrew Lloyd Webber's top-rated long-running hit musical *Starlight Express* at the Victoria Palace," says highly regarded society beauty Lady Rothermere, 34, who exclusively reveals that her favourite colour this season is mauve, "or green, depending".

Former Prime Minister Eton-educated Harold Macmillan, 93, may have died in 1986 — but he's not forgotten. "I remember him well," says grandson, former schoolboy, Alexander, 42. "But then it's not long since he died."

In October, I exclusively reveal that on the death of the present Queen, Belgravia-based former Princess Elizabeth, her eldest son former Naval officer Charles, 42 — close friend of former Goon Harry Secombe, 64 — stands to inherit the throne. This may come as a shock to his younger brother, Andrew, 29 — whose one-time girlfriend actress Katie Rabbett, 27, is currently starring in BBC TV's *You Rang, M'Lud?* on Sunday nights and who may well, she confides, have a baby — "but only after I become pregnant," she insists.

Since establishing myself as *the* leading social historian married to Lady Camilla Dempster, 46, whose great-aunt, Gladys, 91, is the former escort of a close confidante of the former personal assistant to legendary interior designer Hon. Offy Squinks, member of the famous Squinks family of up-and-coming Willesden — I find myself invited to more upper-class parties than I can possibly attend. Yet attend I must, so as not to disappoint my very dear old family friends the aristocracy nor my eight and a half million former readers. For example — today I fit into my packed schedule The Rumbelows PLC Pro-Celebrity Charity Ping-Pong Tournament at Mayfair's Grosvenor House with roly-poly funster Christopher Biggins and effervescent Bonnie Langford in attendance — and the Mike Read/Tim Rice All-Star Charity Roller Disco exclusively catered by Lady Elizabeth Anson, 54, first cousin to the Queen.

PS: My personal guarantee for the New Year — in 1992 Dempster's Diary will continue to bring you all the stories they won't print elsewhere!



Literary Review

Catalogue of despair – 1992

CATALOGUES are publishing at its most seductive, its most glamorous — and its most fake. No amateur student, thumbing through the glossy booklets advertising publishers' wares for the coming six months and eyeing the conveyor belt of apparently fail-safe money-spinners would ever divine the real state of British — correction, Anglo-American — publishing today.

The book trade flounders in recession, hundreds of its employees lost their jobs in 1991, and it is a truth universally acknowledged that publishers publish too many books, unimaginatively, and at prohibitively expensive prices. But is this something you would gather from their catalogues? No. All is fame, lucre and triumphant achievement.

Or almost. Reading between the lines of these breathless accumulations of publicists' prose, it is possible to detect the mild, though insistent, note of unease. What do you do, after all, if fewer people are buying your products and the big retailers — Smith's and wicked Mr Maher — keep squeezing your margins? The answer seems to be that you concentrate on the tried and trusted: royalty, or sub-royalty (this spring brings a biography of Princess Alexandra, not to mention Captain Mark Phillips' *The Horse & Hound Book of Eventing*); on stock bestsellers (the HarperCollins list comes bristling with new work by the likes of Susan Howatch, Craig Thomas and Barbara Erskine). There are blockbusters by mesdames Steel, Cookson and Wesley, and, down in the literary basement, new offerings by Peter Ackroyd, Graham Swift and Ian McEwan. What you will not find is anything that smacks even vaguely of risk.

In fact a slight air of fatigue hangs over several of these puff-sheets, the fatigue of publishers whose strategy to contain the recession has been to dig in, pump the stuff out and hope that, miraculously, turnover will see them through. The result is a torrent of singularly uninteresting books. The Hutchinson catalogue — 50 pages long — contains nothing much more than new novels by Kingsley Amis and Ruth Rendell. Nadir is reached with the Weidenfeld & Nicholson catalogue, which offers memoirs by Eric Hammond and Frank Bruno and, when summarising a book by David Benedictus entitled *Sunny Intervals and Showers*, squeaks with desperation: "This is not an arid and specialist work; though detailed it is infected with a real love for the subject". Golly.

As a touchstone for the way the industry is going, though, catalogues are invaluable. What will the future bring? The answer, apparently is: more celebrity "novels", commissioned on the basis that punters are more likely to buy books by people they've heard of, their exemplar a hugely unappetising work by Rupert Everett entitled *Hello Darling, Are You Working?*; more refusals to learn from past mistakes (only this failing, surely could explain the appearance of second novels by Tariq Ali and Julian Critchley); and more transatlantic psycho-crap, the highlight being a Simon & Schuster offering called *Awaken The Giant Within*, described as "how to take immediate control of your mental, emotional, physical and financial life".

What else? Pious attitudes are struck about the various new trade paperback lists (Chatto, Secker and Hamish Hamilton). These, which offer original novels in softcover, have been puffed all over the place as the future of publishing — "we care a great deal about these books... They are representative of the very best writing that we most wish to publish," says Hamish Hamilton — a concern with the bottom line masquerading as altruism.

What, the reader might wonder, is actually going to *sell* among all this contrivance? These books, regrettably, can be found in places like the Headline catalogue and have titles such as *Brain Damage, The House Of The Red Slayer* and *Games Of The Hangman*. Oh, and in case you hadn't already twigged, it's the Tolkien centenary. Z-z-z-z...

A look black – 1991

□ 1991 WAS the year people finally stopped buying books. Or at least hardbacks. As a result, publishers' advances to authors plummeted. Literary novelists who had received £75,000 for their last books were having to make do, for their next, with £5,000. And most paperbacks were a fiver or more.

It was a drab year for fiction. Most years none of the Booker shortlisted six would have been there, if only because many of our best novelists happen to be female and there wasn't one of them on Jeremy Treglown and his friends' shortlist. (*Shome mishtake, shurely?*)

But a woman has assumed pole position at Random Century, somewhat to the bemusement of those in the building who'd previously regarded Gail Rebuck as a Barbie Doll. Finance director Peter Roche made his getaway just in time to join Anthony "Skinny" and Rosie Cheetham in launching Orion on the shores of Lord Popeye's one-time successful empire. Anthony's old colleagues from Random Century are flocking to him and already it can be revealed that the entire science fiction department is moving. The Barbie Doll is trying to persuade Nick Austin, the world's most experienced science fiction editor, to leave Penguin and step into the breach.

"Skinny" has insisted that, if he is to stay on board for two or three years more, Popeye should put in a spot of dieting. It is to be hoped that Popeye won't try to do an Andre Deutsch, and cling to the driftwood when his time is up.

Philippa Harrison, meanwhile, is still running the ship at Cap'n Bob's publishing house and long may she, and it, survive. Chapter II has probably given her 120 days' grace to come up with the goods. It is likely that Macdonald and its paperback subsidiaries, Futura and Abacus, will eventually be sold to the American group which buys Macmillan there as the British imprints, part of the package being offered, would otherwise almost definitely fail to find a buyer. Tom Bower speedily recycled his biography of the Cap'n, adding 40,000 words, and Mandarin rushed to judgement.

Richard Charkin and his henchmen at Reed enter the new year shaken by the backlash of independent booksellers against the Octopus imprints of Secker & Warburg, Heinemann and Methuen as a result of their de-netting their titles and thus allowing Terry Maher's Dillons and Hatchards shops to discount them. What is even more surprising is that Tim Waterstone followed suit and wetly discounted a similar range of Octopus titles in his emporia.

Maher, bewilderingly, spent millions refurbishing the flag-ship Hatchards in Piccadilly so that it looks almost the same as before, only more down market.

Charkin is so cross about the resistance from other booksellers that Reed has resigned from the Publishers' Association, always a sign of pique, panic and petulance as it was when Macmillan grandly withdrew some years back.

Foyles, as usual, paid no attention to any of this and Christina gave her 591st luncheon, in honour of the Earl of Snowdon, the week before Christmas, the guests including Germaine Greer, Lord Havers and Sir Hardy Amies.

In spite of Pentos's campaign against the net book agreement, it is still with us and now likely to remain so throughout this year, so bored has everyone become arguing the pros and cons.

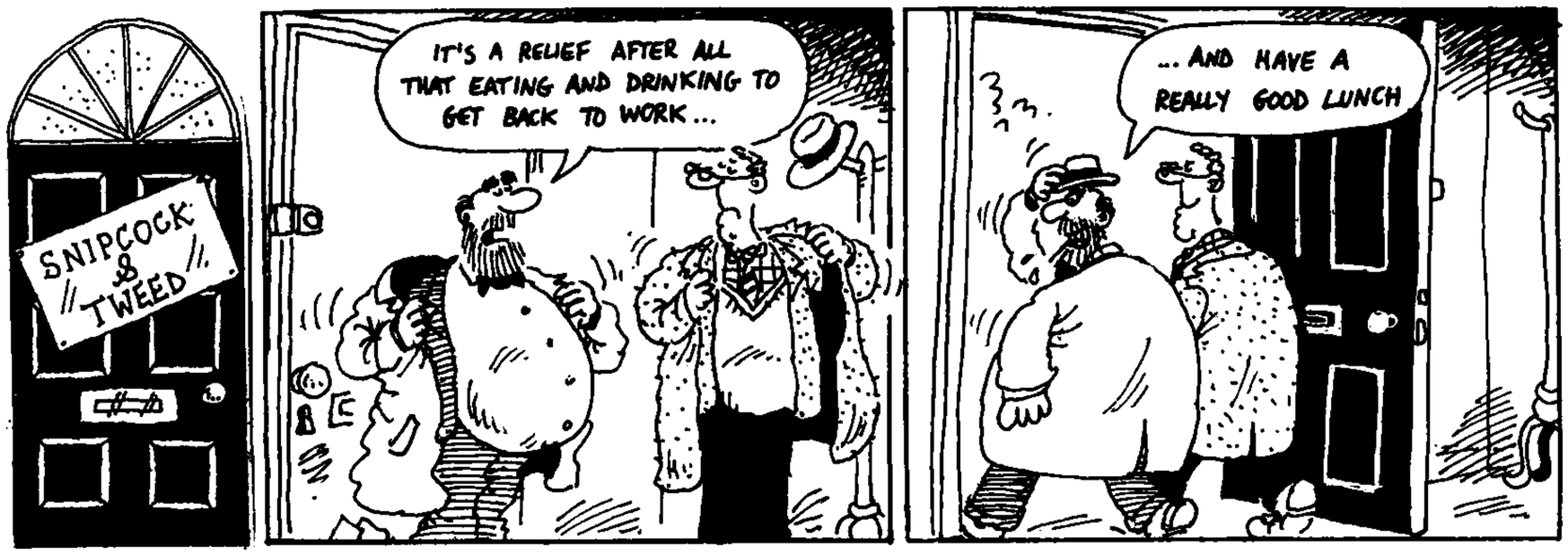
Graham Greene died. K. Amis, J. Osborne and A. Waugh all published volumes of autobiography which caused much amusement in the land. The Queen Mother commended her son's *Watercolours* in a passionate preface, and *The Ultimate Teddy Bear Book* almost topped the bestseller lists. Debbie Owen, wife and agent, urged Dr Death to insert some love interest into his interminable memoirs, and they hit the jackpot. Woy Jenkins kept the love interest out of his, but still they sold.

Melinda Harpey, previously publishing's favourite PR, deserted the trade to do for the Prince of Wales what she did for authors and editors. Matthew Evans decided to help Seymour Hersh in exposing Cap'n Bob by travelling to Amsterdam and pressing Faber cash on an unreluctant conman.

As to poor Penguin, proprietor Pearson cannot persuade Peter Mayer to go gently into the good night or find someone of his energetic stature to replace him. In the States especially, Viking is in the doldrums. Salman Rushdie's revisionist pronouncement that *The Satanic Verses* now be published in paperback won't make Peter's life any easier.

And what of HarperCollins? Eddie Arturo McBastard Bell has signed up Mrs Thatcher and insists he is going to look after her personally, although others will edit and write her Downing Street memoirs. It is agreeable to be able to record that the much-maligned bamboos at Bangkok House, in spite of the destruction meted out to them by McBastard, are sprouting new buds, eager to face up to 1992.

'Bookworm'



Buses

Let's play monopoly

SHORTLY before Christmas the Court of Appeal shut the door firmly on the traditional definition of the word "monopoly" with its ruling on bus transport in South Yorkshire.

If you are reading this while waiting at a bus stop in Sheffield, you may be forgiven for thinking that South Yorkshire Transport (SYT), which swallowed up several rival bus companies in 1989 to gain control of 87 per cent of the Sheffield market, enjoys a certain monopoly of local transport in your area.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission would agree with you; but when it recommended that SYT be compelled to sell the companies, it forgot the 1985 redefinition of "monopoly" which has been upheld at appeal proceedings by both the high court in March and the appeal court in November: a monopoly now has to cover "a substantial part of the UK" to be a monopoly at all.

SYT argued that its operations cover only 2 per cent of the UK and serve only 3 per cent of its population. The legal heavyweights who accepted the argument overlooked one minor impracticality: if you want to go somewhere in Sheffield by bus, there's no use trying to make your journey on a bus run by a "competing" company hundreds of miles away in, say, Plymouth.

Buses companies do of course face stiff competition — from private cars. And it was the stranglehold of the car lobby on the Department of Transport that was behind the deregulation of buses (outside London) under the Transport Act 1985, which passed control of bus services from local licensing authorities to no one at all. (There's no "Ofbus"; and the transport users' consultative committees deal only with complaints against BR: buses are evidently no longer regarded as a form of transport.)

Unlike the MMC, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) would appear to have been recruited to help force the bus industry to walk the plank. For example, in 1988 several South Wales bus companies proposed integrating their timetables and reintroducing return and through tickets valid on all buses, regardless of owner. This drew a stern response from Sir Gordon Borrie, of the OFT, who condemned the companies for plotting to "undermine the drive for competition" which he seemed to think had been inspired by bus deregulation.

It was blindingly obvious to everyone else that the proposed cooperation would have made bus travel infinitely simpler and more attractive. So, inadvertently perhaps, the OFT actively discouraged people from travelling on buses and encouraged them to use cars, taxis or friends and relatives who drive cars.

As transport secretary Cecil Parkinson boasted: "Five million more people now own cars." He did not say that some of those millions might not have wanted to own cars (which are expensive and damage the environment) but were forced to do so by the shambles made of Britain's public transport by successive governments, his own in particular.

As small bus companies are gobbled up by large ones, large ones by huge ones and, following the latest appeal court ruling, huge ones by macro-gargantuan ones, bus bosses should not forget they are fighting the private car lobby *and* HM Government. Most would make bigger profits leaving their money in the bank.

Pollution

Black day for PowerGen

THE DECISION by PowerGen to burn the disgusting substance Oromulsion at its Richborough Power Station has claimed its first casualty in one of the country's worst unemployment blackspots, Ramsgate.

Oromulsion is a nasty, paint-like substance imported from South America. Used at Richborough for most of last year, it has left a nasty black ring around the towers and chimneys of the power station, and has spread an unpleasant sticky soot over much of the surrounding area.

It is also very cheap and there is pressure on the newly-privatised PowerGen to make it work if at all possible.

This is too much for GEFCO, a major importer of Peugeot cars, who have a storage area down the road from the power station. GEFCO is pulling out and cites the Oromulsion deposits as the reason: the soot raining down on the cars is ruining them and making them unsaleable.

GEFCO will now move to Sheerness, causing the loss of 12 jobs and the cutting by Sally Line, the local ferry company and erstwhile importer of the cars, of two crossings a week.

PowerGen, Richborough's owner, continues to rebut all criticisms with reassuring PR. While it is true they are operating within the law, how long they will be able to get away with spreading a black sticky mess over the Garden of England remains to be seen.

Energy

Power Politics

No5: Hot dry rocks

IN THE summer of 1980 the first Thatcher government surprised the energy world by announcing that it was allocating £6 million to Hot Dry Rock.

It sounded like a pop group; but as John Moore, then energy under-secretary, explained, it was a way of obtaining undreamed of riches from the glowing rocks deep underground. Enthusiasts claimed the energy available was infinite.

The idea was simple: bore two deep holes through the granite of Cornwall, and with a series of controlled explosions link them at the bottom. You then squirt cold water down the first; it is turned into boiling hot water by the heat down under and then rises through the second hole, ready to drive power stations and run the country's electricity supply with free hot water. When the stones turn cold, you move your drilling rig 150 feet to the left.

The Cornish borehole at Camborne would provide heat equivalent to 6,000 million tons of coal, said Moore. At that time Britain was using about 100 million tons a year, so the new supply could have kept us going for 60 years without the need to burn a single nut and all by tapping one borehole. By digging in other areas, we would have had heat to burn.

Unusually, the Central Electricity Generating Board was enthusiastic. The leader of the HDR project, Tony Batchelor, forecast modestly that it could provide 1 percent of our electricity by the end of the century; the CEGB said it would be 15 percent. The Government was also encouraged by its Advisory Council on Research and Development (ACORD), not normally optimistic about renewable energy. It put the size of the HDR resource at between 10 and 250 times the country's annual electricity.

When David Mellor became energy under-secretary he used HDR in 1982 as a justification for abandoning wave energy, which needed major investment. Mellor said HDR, this "exciting development" in which we were about to become world leaders, would get "the biggest expenditure". At the end of the first stage, the Government would have to consider whether to go to greater depths to reach higher temperature rocks. "This will be an expensive step and the department will have to consider very carefully..." As recently as 1988 Mellor's successor at energy, Michael Spicer, said HDR would "maintain electricity supplies for the south-west into the foreseeable future".

HDR received more than any other renewable energy source: £39 million in eight years. Indeed, it was nourished so munificently it aroused the suspicion of some people in the Department of Energy that the Government had a secret agenda — it intended to use the underground chamber as a dump for nuclear waste and HDR was just a cover. How else to explain such largesse?

There was, however, a less devious and more probable theory: namely that the powers that be, who were apparently backing HDR, had decided the only major developments would be nuclear. Mrs Thatcher wanted one new pressurised water reactor every year for ten years. Hot dry rock would not produce useful energy until the year 2000, so it would not get in the way. The funding it needed in the early years would be small compared with other renewable sources, like tidal and wave, thus it would be a cheaper alternative in stage one.

Stage one required a pair of boreholes down to only 2,000 metres where the rocks produce hot water at 80°C, sufficient for district heating but not for the really big prize: generating electricity. For that, you must descend to 6,000 metres — the height of a 2,000-storey skyscraper upside down — where the sizzling hot rocks would turn cold water into pressurised hot water at 220°C. This was where the big money would be needed because the deeper you go, the more expensive the drilling becomes. Cynics forecast that when it got to the more expensive operations, the Government's enthusiasm would diminish.

The holes reached the planned depth and just before Christmas 1982 an attempt was made to connect them by means of an explosion, followed by water pumped in at high pressure to open up the cracks and create a reservoir. The reservoir turned out to be below the boreholes, instead of in between. The project teams then drilled a third borehole to reach a lower depth: £10 million had been spent and the new borehole was to cost another £2 million, but the Department of Energy was still in a generous mood.

Towards the end of 1985 there was a gradual change in tone, familiar to those who had witnessed the way officials had handled tidal and wave power. Tony Batchelor, HDR's inspirational project leader, was replaced by Derek Corlett, who became known to staff as Hoover because he sucked up information and gave nothing out. The beginning of the end was an official workshop in January 1990 at Wallingford, Oxfordshire, which decided that a "satisfactory procedure" for HDR had yet to be demonstrated. It was unlikely to be financially competitive and unlikely to attract private sector funding. So the best hope lay in participating in a joint European programme.

Colin Moynihan, the latest energy minister, was asked in February in Parliament if he intended to end the research programme. He replied: "No." He meant "Yes." He said the Department of Energy had "undertaken a thorough review" and it had shown that "very substantial uncertainties remain". So there would now be research in collaboration with the European Community instead of practical development in Cornwall. After three years a decision would be taken about investing in an experimental prototype.

Hot Dry Rock was effectively dead. Once again, a major potential supplier of electricity had been abandoned at the point where it could have started to become a serious energy source. It was a useful friend and had served its purpose.

'Archimedes'

In the City

QUESTION: Why is Robert Maxwell like the wartime French Resistance? ANSWER: Almost everyone who worked *for* him claims to have been fighting *against* him just as all occupied France claimed to have opposed the Nazis.

So much so, indeed, that it is hard to understand how a man "everybody knew" was a crook managed to survive for so long and plunder upwards of £750 million. But then there were also the collaborators, those who knew nothing, did nothing and only obeyed orders.

The real answer is of course that Maxwell obtained by one means or another the silence and collaboration of most of those he employed. Many were only too happy to take Maxwell's money and not run.

But then buying people was what Maxwell was all about. He had a predatory corrupter's eye for those who were buyable and pliable. Many who should have known better were seduced by big cheques. But it was the Dr Faustus Deal and they and their paymaster knew it.

Once on the Maxwell payroll he made no secret of the fact that he owned you. And those he owned, Maxwell treated as objects for humiliation and exploitation.

How could the BBC now have the chutzpah (assuming John Birt knows what that means) ever again to allow Cap'n Bob's former flunkey Peter Jay to ask an Asil Nadir if he is a crook in case the supposed target responds: "What did you do for Maxwell, Mr Jay?" The answer of course is, like so many, to help Maxwell intimidate those who opposed him and apologise for his activities.

Even those who did finally run never blew the whistle, never dropped the dime to make the telephone call that might have motivated the cowering regulators, bullied into respectful silence and inaction by the persuasive power of Maxwell's Big Lie and Big Legal Stick.

But that was then and this is now. And now means that with Cap'n Bob unavailable and the heat on, the big question is who is going to take the legal fall, as distinct from the big splash, for the pillaging?

The prime candidate is clearly Kevin Maxwell, daddy's little helper in so much of what went down inside Maxwell House in recent years. Consider the case against him.

Kevin Maxwell was a director of most if not all the key private companies as well as of Maxwell Communication Corporation, companies between which the missing millions moved. He handled negotiations with banks for loans. He appears to have signed documents if not cheques involving the movement of money from the Mirror Group Newspapers pension fund. He handled deals after his father died such as the sale of the Berlitz stake MCC no longer owned.

He is far from a naive dupe, being described as a knowledgeable businessman by those who know him. "Kevin is a very experienced financier who has put to bed more deals than many in the City," John Holliwell of merchant bankers Henry Ansbacher told *The Observer*. Ansbacher should know, they were long time advisers. So it is hard to believe Kevin Maxwell was ignorant of everything or did not understand the significance of what he did know or of his responsibilities under the Companies Act.

Then there are the curiously inaccurate statements he made in the honeymoon period before the missing three quarters of a billion was discovered. Statements like: "The financial problems are more in the eye of the beholder than they are real." That slight exaggeration was told to his friends at the *Sunday Times* (10 November). How could someone who worked so close know so little and be so wrong?

Either he is a fool — and no one has so far suggested that — or he seems to have inherited his father's elastic view of the facts. If he did not know, that is no defence: as a director he is supposed to know and supposed to ask. If he did know, how could he make such statements? But then how could he sell the Berlitz shares without knowing they already belonged to lending banks?

Finally there is his sudden decision to seek sanctuary in the right of silence over what happened to the *Mirror* pension funds and presumably much else besides. A decision taken no doubt on the advice of his solicitor Monty Raphael — a man who, if you can afford his fees, from experience can tell those who have a problem with the Inspector when to talk and when to shut up. Robert Miller of Dunsdale was happy to help as he was bang to rights. Tony Parnes thought he had an answer so he fought the law but the law won. Both went to prison. No one can deny Maxwell's right to silence, but it might seem a little odd only to exercise it once massive fraud is uncovered after promising a new regime of corporate governance and *glasnost*.

But just as Robert Maxwell could not have executed such a major fraud singlehanded, so Cap'n Bob could not have done it with just the help of faithful first mate Kevin. Documents and cheques usually need to be signed by two or more directors. Loan agreements have to be drawn up. Signatures witnessed. Board approval given. Board minutes passed. Instructions given to banks, advisers and brokers. A number of other Maxwell acolytes have questions to answer.

Ian Maxwell, though more concerned with running MGN, was also a director of certain of the conduits, such as Bishopsgate Investment Management, through which pension money and securities vanished.

Accountant Michael Storey was a man Maxwell counted on to oversee much that happened inside the private companies and later at MGN.

Investment guru Larry Trachtenberg was a key Bishopsgate player in the movement of funds.

A number of other highly paid stooges remained to the end, including not a few lawyers.

No doubt they will all say that they never knew, did what they were told, relied on legal advice, closed their eyes, signed and hoped for the best. The Maxwells can no doubt plead familial loyalty to a dictatorial father. Whether this version of the Nuremburg defence will work remains to be seen.

But what of the directors of MCC from where £345 million appears to have vanished without anyone noticing? Investigating accountants Price Waterhouse have already made their dim views clear about the existing directors.

Chairman Peter Laister angrily denies any knowledge of Maxwell's depredations or that the directors acted improperly.

Maxwell never had much time for directors with too much independence. One reason why Peter Walker may well have decided to walk.

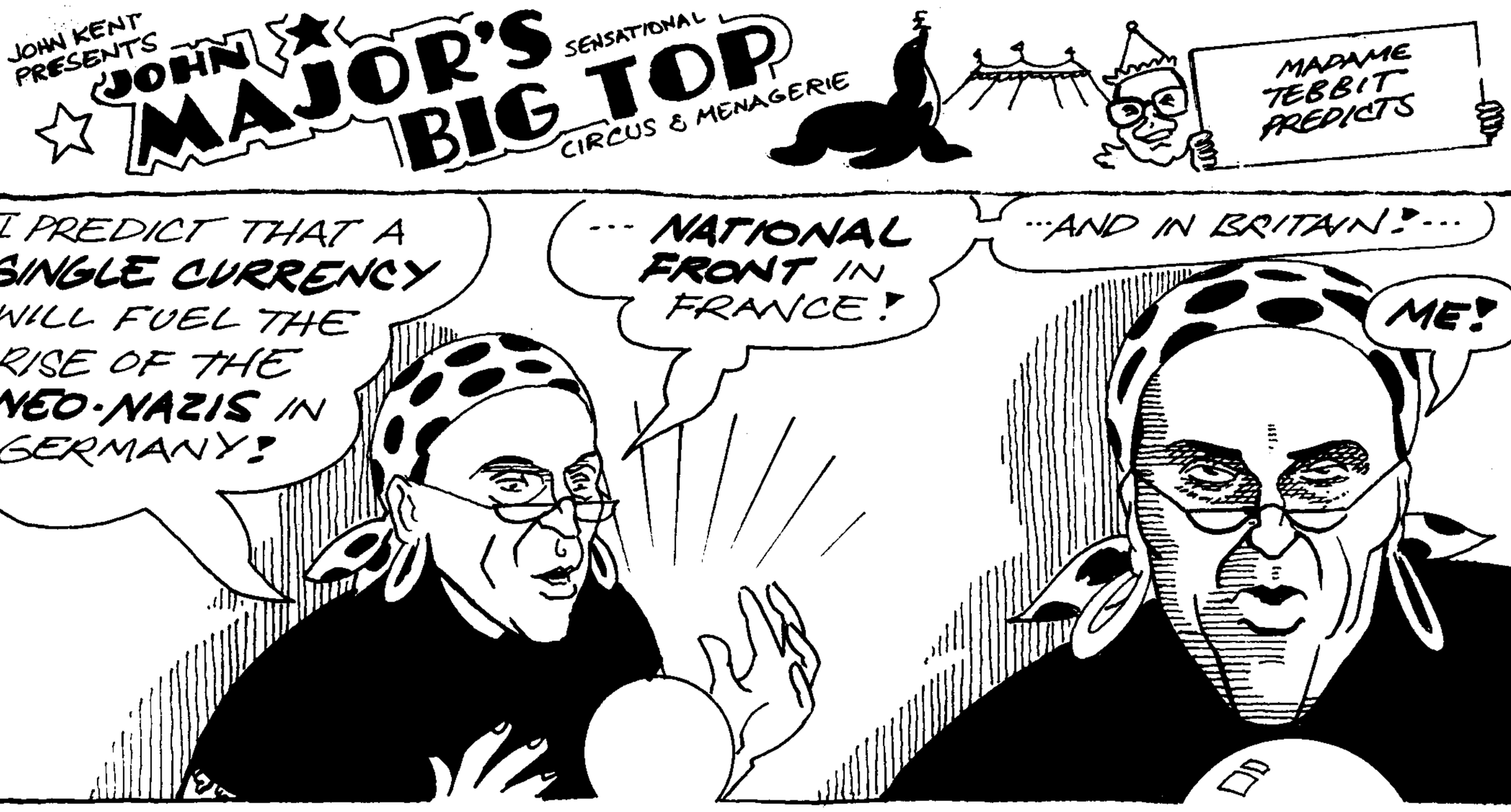
With dutiful sons, cooperative executives and directors who appear at best to have allowed themselves to be somewhat under-informed, it is perhaps no surprise that Cap'n Bob could — as ever — do what he wanted. But ignorance may not be enough to save those closest to his plundering to avoid the Inspector's clutches. And it is very hard to believe with £750 million or more gone, pensioners robbed and shareholders wiped out that someone other than a dead fat man is not going to have to pay the price.

THE NEW YEAR will begin with three fraud trials which started way back in 1991 and are still going strong. The Blue Arrow trial, which long ago passed the 100-day mark and could get close to celebrating a year in court in February, awaits the judge's summing up. Barlow Clowes, fast approaching the 100-day mark, is on to the defence summations. Guinness Two is past the 50-day mark with no end in sight much before Easter.

So much for the speedy justice and expedited fraud trials promised in the brave new world of the Serious Fraud Office and the reforms introduced after the inquiry by Lord Roskill.

Whatever the outcomes of these legal marathons it is hard to see that justice or the jury system is the winner. And if there are guilty men will the punishment fit the crime? If there are not, but merely arcane, alien City customs and practices instead, who is to blame? Once again, for the lawyers it has been a very good year.

'Slicker'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Send your advertisements to reach us by 7th January for inclusion in the next issue.

Almost 12,000 letters were stamped "You bitch" instead of "Merry Christmas" at a post office in Ohio before the mistake was spotted.

DON GRAY PONDERS the London gloom and is confident that in 1992 he will be where he wants to be when he needs to get there. And his annual message? F.G.A.I.A.C.A.T.B.I.T.W.

DAVID — HAPPY 48th. Stay awake this weekending! C & R.

MELISSA. US architect. Gold skirt. Try writing then. Mark. Box 0184.

CLOSE BY. Ask A. WB.

DOCTOR RICHARD — please be patient with me. PS: Rigoletto's at the Barbican, I hear. Love HEATHER — quite quiet really!

1991 WAS KIDDIEWINKIE Year 1. They're in place. Rockweiler howling is in. Now watch the decline.

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BALLOON SAFARIS around London and the South East. Xmas offer £99 pp. 0784 451007.

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Eye Read

MAXWELL TO Morrissey. Maxwell — the Octopus conspiracy, Morrissey — Major re-appraisal, women, comics, earth summit manoeuvres and more. OUTLOOK MAGAZINE, £1.20 from most newsagents. £1.50, 87 Kirkstall Road, London SW2 4HE.

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE are publishing for themselves — the DTP revolution hits Britain. Read all about it, join it, do it yourself. The all-new 1992 Small Press Yearbook is now on sale at the old price — £6.99 + £1 p&p. Lists more than 2,000 small presses in Britain, access to 20,000 in America. Tips galore! SMALL PRESS GROUP, 20 Paul Street, Frome, BA11 1DX. Credit cards: 0373 51777

CLUE 8: The Ripper called the shots as he murdered in accord with his letters to the police. In desperation the police published extracts of his writing in hopes of a breakthrough. He then sent the police a tape-recorded message, mimicking a Geordie accent. He could hardly use his own accent. He again included the Preston murder in his toll of 11, and promised another. To the day he delivered by murdering student Barbara Leach almost within sight of the Bradford Ripper Squad HQ, his copy-cat's home town, whom he was baiting. "The Real Yorkshire Ripper Revealed", £5.00, NOEL O'GARA, Ballinahowen, Athlone, Ireland.

NEW DEPARTURES revival issue is 400-page GRANDCHILDREN OF ALBION, 40 younger voices Agard Bragg JCC Gabriel LKJ Okri Pitt-Kethley Weller Zephaniah et al beaut pix sent post free til Feb '92 for only £9.99 to NEW DEPARTURES, Piedmont, Bisley, Stroud, Glouc. GL6 7BU.

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SUPERANNUATION — at last! "Your Future Pension Explained" in easy to read free booklet from: FREEPOST, Ref 2791, Leeds LS11 5YY.

Eye Help

NEW YEAR'S Resolutions difficult to keep? Handwriting analysis for more insight/determination. SAE: 59 Warwick Avenue, Harrow, Middx.

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MAIL BOX rental. Private mail boxes available in Central London. Access 365 days, 24 hours a day. Call 071 225 2625 for your nearest outlet.

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ACCOMMODATION address (Angel, Islington). Your name, our address. 071 833 3518.

MAILING ADDRESS. Telephone answering. Secretarial services. ALLTYPES. 071-381 1292.

Eye Need

SADDLE-SORE. Fundraising cross-India charity cycle ride needs more donations! Now reached half-way. If anyone wants more information or even a "progress report" while I am away, they are invited to phone either of the two charities on the following numbers: Queen of Hearts Cardiac Theatre, Univ. Hospital, Nottingham, Maurice Payne (0602) 206033 or Indian Volunteers for Community Service; Mr or Mrs Singh (-81) 864 4740. Donations to Mr D. Minett, c/o Messrs Andersons (Solicitors), 42 the Ropewalk, Nottingham BN1 5EJ.

PLEASE HELP ME if you can! I am a disabled (Cerebral Palsy) man in my 20s and as a result confined to a wheelchair. My one aim in life is to be as independent as possible. In an attempt to achieve this aim I am trying to raise £10,000 through fundraising and donations to go towards the cost and special adaptations required in a property I wish to live in. However, raising such a large amount is proving to be very difficult and as a result I may lose this property. All I ask is that if there are readers out there who may be able to help then PLEASE, PLEASE do get in touch with me. If required I will most willingly provide documentation to show that this is a genuine request. Box 1084.

HELP FROM ANYBODY for a poor child to find a nursing home for invalid children in Europe or anywhere, and to meet the expenses. We haven't got those types of homes in the Gambia. My daughter has been sick for a long time and cannot walk nor talk. She is 13 years of age and she cannot do anything for herself and is very heavy for me to lift. Box 1184.

JUST A FIVER from five per cent of you will rebuild my shattered existence. Banks myopic. This is my last chance. Box 1284.

OPERA SOUTH (registered charity) desperately needs financial help to survive. All donations welcome. Box 0884.

DESPAIRING DEBTOR NEEDS £10,000. Otherwise all lost. Help appreciated. Thanks. Box 0984.

TWO BODACIOUS dudes require £10,000 each for rock'n'roll lifestyle. Box 4484.

I URGENTLY REQUIRE one hundred thousand pounds to provide financial security for myself and elderly invalid mother. Genuine. Box 6484.

YOU'RE PSYCHIC! I'm poor! Eight score draws please!. Box 6584.

PLEASE HELP — £6,000 debt, bank seeking immediate repayment. Desperate. Box 6684.

Eye Escape

RUSSIA – SIBERIA, Kremlin, St Petersburg, Vodka, Bolshoi, saunas, skiing, rafting! Want a holiday with a real difference? Tel: RUSSKIES, 0742-583591.

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ESCAPE TO the peace of the Somerset countryside. 2-bedroomed cottage in Glastonbury town centre, centrally-heated and cosy, with views across the Abbey grounds. Winter and spring dates still available (long lets preferred). Telephone: 0234 211606 (answerphone).

TRANS AFRICA 16 weeks London-Nairobi. Departs 16 Feb. 995. ACACIA EXPEDITIONS. Tel: 081-451 3877.

COTSWOLD GLIDING CLUB. Five-day holiday courses inclusive of all flying and instruction. £225. Accommodation lists supplied. 0285-760415 for brochure.

Sell your novel gift idea in the EYE NOVELTIES column, and reach 729,000* potential customers.

*National Readership Survey Figure. June 1991

GREEK ISLANDS, Cyclades, with SIMPLY SIMON HOLIDAYS. Mykonos, Paros, Naxos, Ios, Santorini, Sifnos, etc. "The best place in the world to take your clothes off!" Brochure 071-373 1933.

SMALL AD/BIG discount. Africa/Europe/USA. ABACUS TRAVEL, 0462-480680.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION — get mobile in '92. Seaside Residential Driving Courses. HIGHWAY HOLIDAYS: 0492-531517.

NOMAD AFRICA: 9 weeks into the Rift Valley and Interior. £835 (includes rafting, gorilla and chimpanzee sanctuaries.) Departs 28 Jan 92. Last few places. Call 0672-86333.

AFRICAN ADVENTURE at its best. Camping safaris from 1-34 weeks. New 1992 brochure. Phone 081-451 3877. ACACIA EXPEDITIONS, 5 Walm Lane, London NW2.

GATWICK 5 MILES. Stanhill Court Country House Hotel, ETB, 4 Crowns, bar, restaurant, free parking and transfer, B&B. From £24.50 P.P.P.N. 0293 862166.

AFRICA EXPLORED. Morocco, 2 weeks (£250), 8 weeks (£560 the Sahara) and 22-week (£1,050. London/Nairobi) overland African expeditions. Phone 0633 222250 for brochures.

AUSTRALIA — 100s of winter holiday jobs in the sunshine. Phone 0898 805 705.

TRAVEL THROUGH time with FRESCO in 1992 to Provence, Malta, Shetland, India, Tuscany, Greece and other exciting destinations. Relaxing hotels, amazing archaeological sites and friendly companions. Brochure from FRESCO, Dept P 12-14 Hall Square, Denbigh, Clwyd, LL16 3NU, UK. Tel: 0745 816268 (24 hours).

ADVENTURE and wildlife tours throughout India, Nepal and Thailand this winter. CHANDERTAL TOURS, 0323 646604.

TRUCK AFRICA: Overland Adventure Travel. 5-7 months England to Kenya/Zimbabwe £1360. 6 weeks Kenya to Zimbabwe £475. Regular departures. 071-731 6142 (24 hours) for brochure.

EXODUS EXPEDITIONS — Overland. Africa, Asia, South America from 4 to 23 weeks. For brochures telephone 081-673 0859.

EXPLORER EXPEDITIONS: Late booking reduction February '92 departure 21 weeks Trans-Africa £1,000, 27 weeks £1,100. 6-week Nairobi — Victoria Falls — Nairobi £395. Telephone 071-485 4720/ 0633 257561 for brochure.

ASIA, AFRICA, SOUTH AMERICA overland expeditions. UK to Kathmandu, 9, 13 or 15 weeks. UK to Nairobi 20 weeks, to Harare 26 weeks. Nairobi to Harare 5 weeks, S. America 6 to 23 weeks. Turkey, M. East, Egypt 8 weeks. New colour brochure. DRAGOMAN (PE), 8 Camp Green, Debenham, Suffolk IP4 6LA. 0728 861133 (24 hours).

HAVE SHORTS Will Travel, 7-21 weeks African overland expeditions £400-£1,150; 091 526 5488/0850 330545 for brochure.

DRIVING LANDROVER to ERITREA. January. Share costs/company. Box 0982.

FLIGHT OPTION 0432 851062.

GNOME ALONE. Avoid a major crisis. Contact HIGH RIDINGS TRAVEL for worldwide airfares. Tel: 0924 471177, fax: 0924 475207.

USA BEST Air Fares. Australia, New Zealand, Worldwide. MERIT TRAVEL, 79 High Street, London, SE25 6EA. Tel: 081-653 6514.

DESPERATE GIRL needs £2,000. Any work considered. Thanks. Box 0384.

EUROPE 1992. Ambitious, bright 24 yr male. Eager to work with our European counterparts. Has basic knowledge of Spanish. Quick to learn. Box 0484.

BOARD GAME inventor seeks manufacturer/marketer. Box 4084.

GENUINE PSYCHICS sought to set up informal practical quest group. No cranks please. Box 0284.

WANTED. ANY information on Hazleton, UK. Please write: HAZLETON ACTION GROUP, PO Box 118, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 9RA.

TEXACO STARS purchased. £3 per 100. Cash. 0202-558672.

COURAGEOUS, SOCIABLE men — not intimidated by restaurant club parties with attractive single ladies — call MEET 'N' EAT 071-629 5534.

ADULT MAGAZINES bought for cash. 081-340 9668.

"LIFE TRAINING" therapy-cult. Info on effect on families sought by victim. Write in confidence. Box 0283.

The first one or two words of all ads are in bold type at no extra charge.
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NEWSPAPER: Small, profitable, English-language, in Greece. Nothing to do with Maxwell! CORFU NEWS, c/o 96 Riverside, Cambridge, CB5 8HN, Tel: (0223) 60572 after 6 pm.

INSTANT SIGNWRITING! Ready to apply vinyl lettering for vehicles, windows, etc. PROPAgANDA, 56 Chalk Farm Road, London NW1. 071-485 1000.

OLD PERSIAN RUGS, carpets, runners. Mostly £60-£2,000. Not a shop, just a shed, so telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, The Orchard, East Peckham, Kent. 0622 871 353.

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HI-FI CLEAROUT. It's one scoop after another here at RICHER SOUNDS, your favourite hi-fi store! If you don't mind yelling, come and get a piece of the action at prices that make grown men weep! RICHER SOUNDS. Freephone 0800 591366 (24 hrs) for your FREE copy of our bargain-packed fun catalogue/price list.

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PORSCHE, BMW, Mercedes connections — free details and instant access to over 1,500 privately pre-owned Porsches, BMW and Mercedes-Benz. Other prestige and sports cars located on request. Efficient, cost-effective sales, service for vendors of such vehicles. Keen to buy or sell? Telephone: 081-447 8231.

GROW-LIGHTS grow any plant from seed to maturity indoors or in greenhouse all year round. Free brochure SUNLIGHT SYSTEMS (Dept PE), 3 St Mary's Works, Burnmoor Street, Leicester LE2 7JJ. Tel: 0533 470490/470488.

UNIVERSITY DEGREES by mail. Free details: U.D.M. 6 Springlawn Drive, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Ireland.

PERSONAL 1992 horoscopes. Great gifts. SAE to PO Box 24, Salisbury Green, Southampton SO3 6XQ.

LOGS DELIVERED. London. 10 sacks £55. 081-691 4984.

DISCREET LISTENING and recording equipment. Free catalogue. 021-411 1821.

OLD VOLKS HOME requires inmates. We buy — sell — restore — VW Beetles, BROOKS OLD VOLKS HOME, Oakley Works, Chinnor, Oxon. 0844-53535.

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THE BEAUCHAMP CLUB — Convivial dinner parties at select venues for professional people who enjoy good food and wine. Please call for details: 081-568 7183 or 0784 247653.

MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES? Join PATHMAKER, PO Box 84, Holmes Chapel, Crewe, CW4 8QH. Send SAE.

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Free details: DATELINE (9090), 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 or Tel: 071-938 1011. ABIA.

GREGARIOUS MEN urgently wanted to meet attractive single ladies at London restaurant club parties. Call MEET 'N' EAT, 071-629 5534.

CZECHMATE — 500+ cultured, sophisticated ladies — doctors, teachers, lawyers, radio, TV producers, "the Arts", from Czechoslovakia, seek sincere gentlemen for marriage. As featured on BBC News, Anglia TV, BBC World Service, Radio and TV, Sunday Observer. 0582-25960.

MARGARET'S PEN CLUB — make new friends today. Age groups, 16-76. All areas, SAE details, PO Box 1, Prestwick, Ayrshire KA9 1RJ.

1000 PRETTY GIRLS worldwide want friendship, romance, marriage with you. Ask for our Free Photobrochure! CORRESPONDENCE CLUB '70/PE, Box 8177, Rotterdam, Holland.

TRY TELEMATE telephone dating. Don't talk, just listen. Ring 0898 228714 (calls charged at 34p cheap and 45p all other times).

MEN! COME AND meet us for Sunday lunch at home. Good food, good female company. Call 081-788 2453 or 081-871 0482.

SERIOUS SEEKERS of spouses should contact Katherine Allen: "the ultimate in made-to-measure marriage bureaux" (S/Tel). Established 1960. 18 Thayer Street, London W1M 5LD. Tel: 071-935 3115.

ATTRACTIVE, 30 year old lady wishes to meet generous, successful businessman for long term discreet affair, 40-60 years. Box 3684.

EDUCATED, WITTY, charming, romantic bachelor, 35, seeks brainy bimbo. Am I mad, or what? Box 3784.

VERY HANDSOME, tall, upmarket, educated, married Canadian, 43, seeks attractive, married woman for wonderful, discreet afternoons. London. Box 3884.

40, MALE, 6', seeks younger, lively, slim female for stimulating daytime/lunch meetings. Photo please. Box 3984.

FIRST TIME I've tried this. Tall Aries, workaholic, trying to reform, alleged loving and sense of humour, seeks lady brave enough to reply. Box 4184.

GOODLOOKING wealthy businessman, mid-30s, slim, energetic, fed up with gold-diggers, seeks attractive female, possibly similar situation, absolute discretion assured. Box 4284.

HAPPILY CONNECTED male dynamo seeks electric female to generate super current, with discretion assured. Box 4384.

ORIENTAL LADY wanted (30/40) by professional English gentleman. Photo and phone number essential. Box 9479.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 31, tall, strong, handsome and kind, seeks pretty, blonde, public-school girlfriend, 18-23 (send photo). How about skiing next month? Box 2681.

LUNCH IN PARIS. (home for tea!) for best letter from attractive lady of character. All replies acknowledged. Box 5082.

ONE-OFF, good humoured, single, handsomely statuesque Yank teddy-bear classical male musician (39) seeks a prospective Mrs Bach to experience fugues with forever. You are 25-40, European (preferably Scandinavian), without issue, well read, sensual and exquisite in every way. Photo/letter/phone/ASAP. Happy Holidays! Box 5482.

AFFECTIONATE intellectual male, 43, 6ft, slim, attractive and sexy — seeks young lady for loving relationship. Must be a good kisser. Lives near London. Box 5784.

STUNNING SINGLE LADY stuck in Kent seeks intelligent single gentleman 40-55 to ease suffocating boredom. Interest in arts and music would help. A.L.A. Box 5584.

SPARKLING BLONDE/brunette sought by successful man (married) with own business and brains, for discreet fun. Box 6984.

AFFECTIONATE, SLIM, quiet, gentle, blonde, 30, seeks (London) professional (lawyer?) forever. Contact address? Box 7084.

BUSTY, LONG-HAIRED lady sought by rich, single music-loving London hedonist male, 45. Box 1384.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 50, who is now alone after years of being a Bridge widow, would like to meet professional man, 50s, for companionship and possible long-term commitment. Interested in current affairs, theatre, eating-out, walking and travel, though does not fly. London/Kent area. Box 1484.

VERY ATTRACTIVE, interesting female lawyer, 27, seeks man, 29-40, to charm and dazzle her and make all her wildest dreams come true. Box 1584.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE, warm, caring, articulate business-woman (48) with delightful house in Derbyshire Peak District seeks permanent soulmate. Interests: travel, witty conversation, skiing, theatre. No one-night stands, please. Box 2583.

DASHING, PROFESSIONAL male, 27, high-flying, romantic, caring, funny, seeks slim, attractive, stylish, lady, 23-30 for love, laughs. London/SE. Box 2883.

SATISFIED? Neither am I. Handsome male, 32, sporty, adventurous, loving, seeks female spark to start a blaze. Age, location unimportant. Photo and phone please. Go on take a chance... Box 1684.

SENSUOUS SKIER (F) sought to share an active Alpine week with me. Amazement guaranteed. Box 1784.

LONDON MAN, professional, single, presentable, civilised, 49, seeks bored brunette for laughs and love. Photo appreciated. Box 1884.

ROMANTIC, TENDER, married young 50s MD feels sure there is more to life than frustration. Is there an hedonistic N.E. lady, like-minded, who could enjoy diurnal delights with discretion? Let's take a chance! Box 1984.

HANDSOME, SLIM, intelligent student, (22) with respectable and good natured personality, slightly shy and bisexual (a little) seeks totally secretive fun with bored, attractive woman (17-45), married or unmarried. Oxfordshire. Photo if possible. Box 2084.

COMPANY DIRECTOR, early thirties, previously spent too long building up business, now seeks sensual tutoress, 25-45, for tuition and refinement in the bedroom arts. Pupil has educated, intelligent and willing nature. Generous grant system available. Discretion guaranteed if necessary. Photo and full training details (preferably enclosing steamy letter and silk stockings) to Box 2184.

JOHN, 23, living in Bristol, 5'10", slim, intelligent, own house and car, etc. Interests include: music, eating out, conversation (preferably intelligent). Seeks that special lady with whom to share the nicer things in life. Box 2284.

CLAPPED OUT, cynical media male, mid-thirties, disillusioned, malcontent but very successful seeks soulmate. Scotland. Box 2384.

UTTERLY RAVISHING, sparky, blue-eyed brunette seeks handsome, Oxbridge (or Harvard?) wit, 30s/40s. London/The World. Photo/phone essential. Box 2484.

Our apologies! There is still a delay before your Eye Love ad can be published due to the enormous demand of these exclusive, funny, popular and highly successful ads. Thank you for your patience.

TALL, BLONDE, athletic graduate, 24, mid-south, seeks intelligent, attractive girl of similar age for warm, passionate affair. Photo plus letter guarantees reply. Box 2884.

WANTED. GAME for a Laugh female, 35-45, for this fun loving guy. Photos/phones exchanged. Box 2984.

BACHELOR, 31, 5'10", seeks degenerate lady, 35-50 into fishnets and frolics. London. Box 3084.

BEAUTIFUL LADY, 40, seeks younger man for permanent relationship. Box 3184.

MISERABLE, LONELY and boring Quasimodo, 27, seeks princess to share long, dull winter evenings and awkward silences. SAE. ALA. Photo if possible. Box 3284.

AFFECTIONATE, sincere, outgoing London female graduate, 43, 5'6", slim, goodlooking, likes cinema, theatre, music, travel, cooking, dining out and conversation, seeks male for long-term, romantic, caring relationship. Exchange photos and letters. ALA. Box 3384.

PRESENTABLE, attached male, forties, seeks lady for very discreet affair. North West England. Photo appreciated. Box 3484.

BLONDE, ACTIVE, fun-loving, 30. Aquatic, country loving flippet, non-materialistic, luxury lover seeks witty, unattached, kind, exciting male with bath. E. Mids. Box 3584.

SHEFFIELD-BASED black-stockinged civil servant (27) seeks male with non-Yorkshire attributes — attractive, humorous, generous, unmarried 35-45. Photo and bank statement helpful. Box 2584.

VIVACIOUS, ATTRACTIVE, professional female with diverse cultural interests, (passions include motorsport) seeks erudite male, 45+, with warmth, wit, nerve and style. Box 2684.

CAMBRIDGE-BASED man, 35, attractive, intelligent, professional, seeks non-Tory soulmate. Box 2784.

ALEX seeks Independent Penny. Box 5184.

NYMPHOMANIAC blonde short fat slut, 33 (55-45-55) wishes to marry titled aristocrat. Box 4584.

I'M A happy-but-bored man. You're a fun lady in her thirties, bored too and looking for an occasional, no strings adventure, living London and westwards. Why not send some information and photo? (Total discretion, honestly.) I'm an allegedly good-looking, young forty-something. I'm solvent with the ability to enjoy day, evening and weekend free time... so how about you? Box 4684.

UNDERNOURISHED, amorous professional 50s male seeks affectionate discreet female to add sparkle to life. Edinburgh. Box 4784.

GLASGOW professional married gentleman, 45, seeks that special lady for prolonged discreet daytime dalliance. Box 4884.

PRETTY, INTELLIGENT, creative woman, 42, arts, languages, tennis, seels similar unattached sincere gentleman for continuing relationship. Photo, full letter appreciated. London. Box 4984.

PLYMOUTH male, young 41 and divorced, seeks discreet affair with married woman. Box 5084.

FEMALE FRIEND WANTED — adventurous, humorous, very slim, not too tall. You don't have to be the most beautiful girl in the world, just tempting. Me: a bit ravaged, slim, greying, cropped hair, always tanned, never broke, interesting lifestyle, generous nature. You: 40ish, race, children, mortgage, immaterial. Me: lousy husband, material great friend. Exchange photos — return promised. Box 5684.

MALE ACADEMIC, 30, 6ft, seeks female 20-35 for cultural outings and intimate innings. London/SE. Box 5884.

TALL ATTRACTIVE male doctor, 28, seeks stylish lingerie-loving woman to pamper. Box 5984.

RICH, HANDSOME, funny, overworked, Aston-Martin driver with own company seeks lovely girl for winter holiday in the sun. Photo appreciated. Box 6084.

GORGEOUS HAZEL-EYED honey blond lady (33) intelligent with stunning figure seeks seriously solvent, handsome, humorous male to help her laugh the winter blues away. Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Box 6184.

ISN'T THERE A WOMAN who wants the same as me? You: over forty, very attractive, looking for a single, secret liaison which is fun, sophisticated, and very, very sensual. Me: 49, businessman, nearly 6ft, athletic build — considered very attractive and civilised. London. Box 6284.

GALWAY WRITER (27), German emigrant, pipe-smoker, bit of a sex-maniac, looking for honest girlfriend. Single mother welcome. Box 6384.

THIS ONCE, REPLY! Attractive, unconventional, creative, thirtysomething lady — loves, mountains, 'great outdoors', travel, life! Seeking similar man. Letter/Photo appreciated. Box 6784.

UPMARKET maried man, handsome and fit, seeks gorgeous lady for delicious discreet relationship. Anywhere. Box 6884.

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Where does their courage come from?

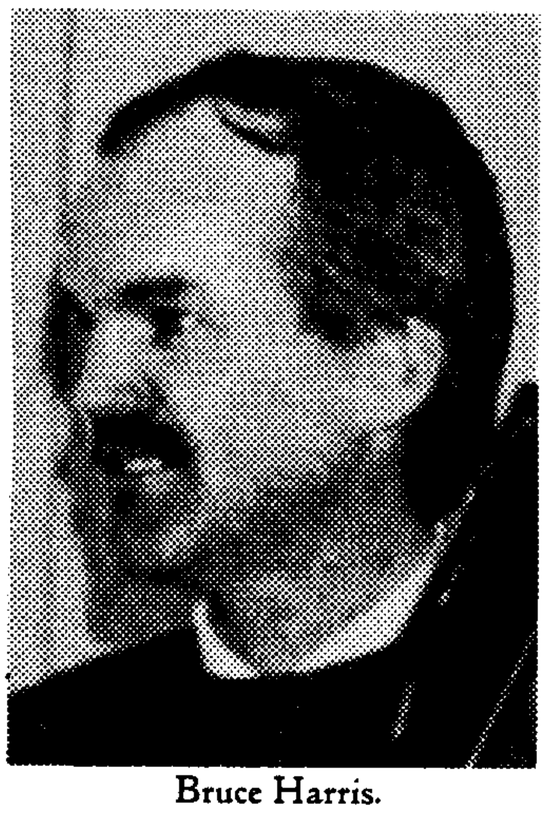
A car screeched through the streets of Guatemala City. As it neared a children's home, it slowed.

Out of its windows erupted a storm of gunfire, pockmarking the white adobe walls and terrifying the children inside.

Bruce Harris, the British social worker who ran the home, knew exactly what the attack meant. It was a warning to get out.

Guatemala City police had killed many of the street children with whom he worked. One boy was kicked to death in an attack so violent that it split his liver. Others were found with their eyes burned out and their tongues ripped from their mouths.

Bruce Harris knew that he might himself be killed. Yet he refused to give up his work. Where did his courage come from?



Bruce Harris.

In Burma last May, Aung San Suu Kyi led a campaign for justice and human rights. Her party won more than 80% of the votes in the first free elections to be held for over 30 years.

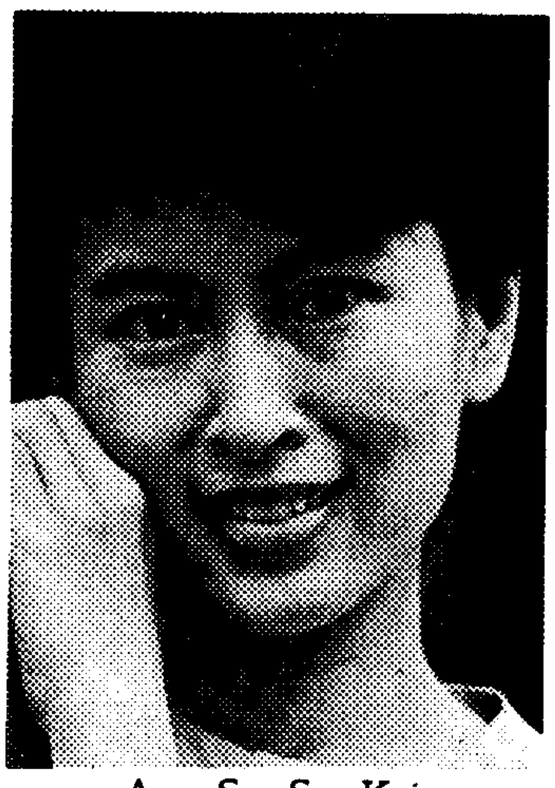
Instead of handing over power, the Burmese regime placed her under house arrest and imprisoned hundreds of her supporters.

After Suu Kyi went on hunger strike in protest, the regime promised to give her people 'fair trials.'

This year she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize but was not allowed to leave Burma to receive it.

Her husband, an Oxford professor, and their two British sons cannot visit her or even communicate with her.

Yet Suu Kyi does not give up. Where does her courage come from?



Aung San Suu Kyi.

In Syria, a man called Riad Al-Turk has been in prison since 1980. Arrested for his political beliefs, he was imprisoned without trial, never charged with any offence.

Riad Al-Turk suffers from kidney failure, chronic heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

He is known to have been severely tortured. Many times he has been rushed to intensive care and kept alive, only to be tortured again, and again.

The Syrians have 38 methods of torture. The 'washing machine' crushes prisoners' fingers in a rotating drum. The 'Syrian Chair' strangles them.

He has not seen his two children for eleven years.

Despite repeated calls there is still no hope of his release. Where does this man get his courage?

Riad Al-Turk.

"I'll tell you a small story which I told in Damascus. I was kept in total and complete isolation for four years. I saw no-one and spoke to no-one apart from a cursory word with my guards when they brought the food.

And one day out of the blue a guard came with a postcard. It was a postcard showing a stained glass window from Bedford showing John Bunyan in jail.

". . . And I turned the card over and there was a message from someone whom I didn't know simply saying 'We remember, we shall not forget. We shall continue to pray for you and to work for all people who are detained around the world.'

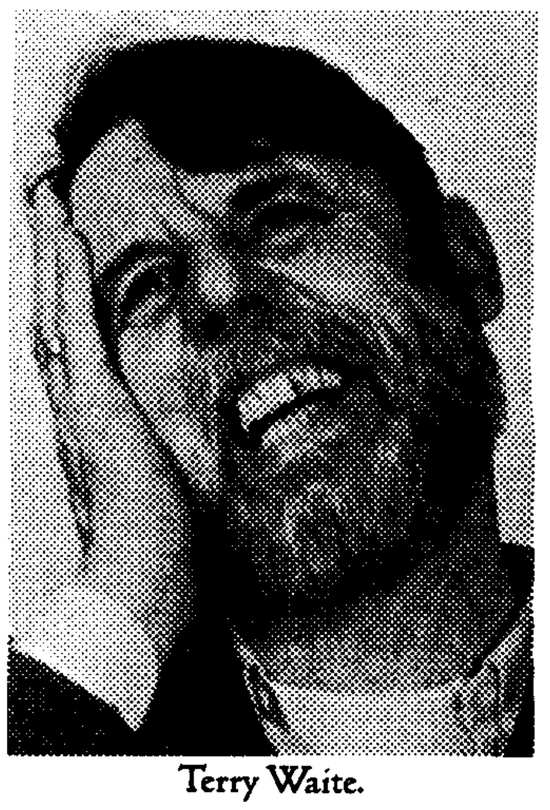
"That thought sent me back to the marvellous work of agencies like Amnesty International and their letter-writing campaigns, and I would say: never despise those simple actions. Something, somewhere will get through to the people you are concerned about as it got through to me . . ."

These were virtually the first words that Terry Waite spoke after his own release from captivity.

Instead of dwelling on his own ordeal, he chose to remind us that in prisons all over the world there are thousands of innocent people, unjustly held in terrible conditions, whose names will never be publicly known.

He urged us to work for their freedom. Not to despise the small help that each of us can give.

Join Amnesty and help campaign for the release of people unjustly imprisoned and tortured. Even the



Terry Waite.

'simple action' of writing a postcard can bring someone hope.

Where does their courage come from? Terry Waite told us.

Their courage comes from you.

I wish to be a member of Amnesty International. I enclose £15 Individual ☐ £20 Family ☐ £6 OAP ☐ £6 Student, Under 18, Claimant ☐ I wish to donate £250 ☐ £100 ☐ £50 ☐ £25 ☐ £10 ☐ Other ☐ I enter my Access, Visa, Mastercard No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Signed _____

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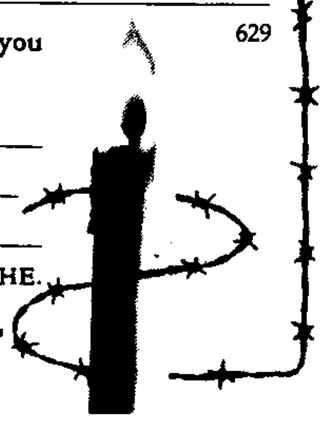

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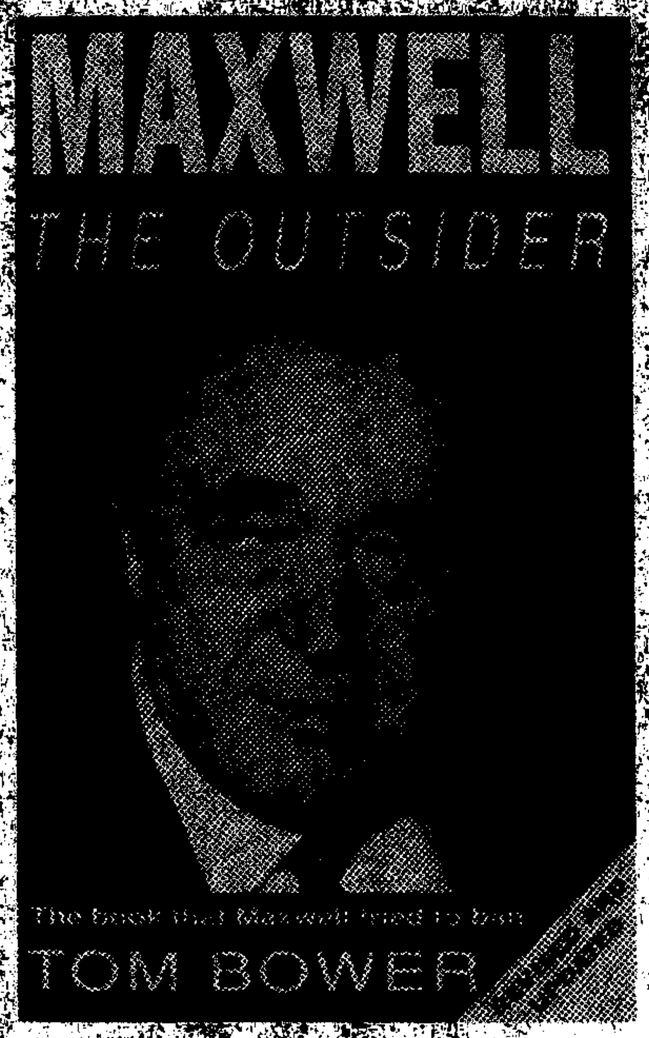

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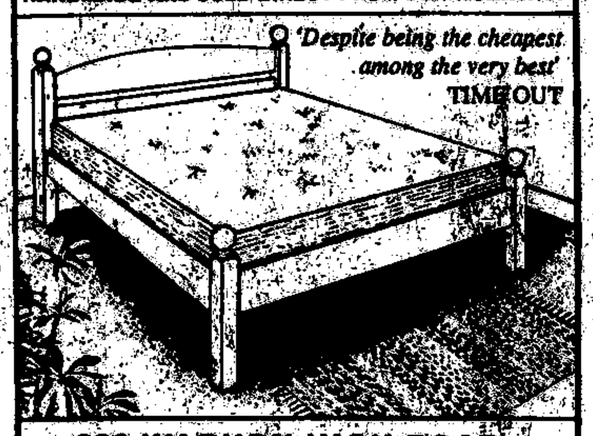

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